1984

Towards a Theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Meeting Place, with a Study of Practical Implications and Applications Thereof

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ABSTRACT

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MEETING PLACE, WITH A STUDY OF PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS THEREOF

by

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Dissertation Report

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Title: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVESTIST MEETING PLACE, WITH A STUDY OF PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS THEREOF

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From the beginning mankind has selected places for adoration in which to worship the Creator. There is little information as to the kinds of facilities used by true worshipers of God in Old Testament times, until the wilderness sanctuary was built. On the other hand there is no indication in the Scriptures that the sanctuary and, later, Solomon's temple were established as model places of worship for future generations.

The New Testament mentions three major kinds of places of worship: the temple, the synagogue, and the house church.

This study discusses the characteristics of places of worship during selected periods of the Christian era. Theological

and practical insights are gained from the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and current Christian literature.

This project also identifies one of the crucial problems that the SDA Church is facing in Latin America--the lack of means to provide places of worship for each congregation. On the other hand, it points out that the existing church buildings are generally inadequate to carry out the holistic mission of the Church. While recognizing that a place dedicated exclusively for worship seems to be the ideal, it calls for a realistic reappraisal of the current situation in the light of the New Testament experience and of contemporary experimentation in some Christian circles.

The project concludes with a discussion of the multipurpose building as a practical way of satisfying the combined needs of (1) a place of worship, (2) a place for community service, and (3) a place for fellowship, thus helping the Church to carry out the holistic mission entrusted to it by the Great Master.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MEETING PLACE, WITH A STUDY OF PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS THEREOF

A Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

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DEDICATION

To my fellow-workers in Latin America and to those in any place where the Gospel's message is rapidly growing.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to give my gratitude, praise, thanks, and worship to my loving Heavenly Father, to Jesus Christ my personal Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit for their sustaining strength and mercies, without which this project could never have been accomplished.

Special thanks and appreciation to my dear family, because without their understanding encouragement this project would never have been completed.

My deep gratitude is extended to the chairman of my committee Dr. Werner Vyhmeister for his friendship, experience, and many hours of assistance towards the completion of this project.

I would also like to thank Dr. Robert Johnston for his enthusiastic guidance and ideas that helped to produce a more fine result.

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This project is now a reality, because of the dedicated services of editor Joyce Jones who in a very kind and concerned way has taken care of the editorial work of this project, and to the typist Joyce Campbell. To both of them I would like to express my appreciation.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America is growing at a rather fast pace. Growth bring about new challenges and problems. Some of these problems are those of economics which affect the material growth of the church.

Thousands of Seventh-day Adventist congregations in Latin America do not have their own place of worship. As they continue to grow and multiply, the problem becomes more acute and no clear solution is in sight.

On the other hand, limited resources and lack of knowledge about the role of the church have already resulted in the erection of thousands of church buildings with few if any ancillary facilities to better serve the congregation and the community.

Traditionally, the Seventh-day Adventist Church built what could be called "worship/lecture rooms,"[1] places where people could come to worship and listen to the preaching of the Gospel. But as time went by and changes took place, new activities and programs were necessary for the growing church. These included: children's Sabbath School, youth activities, the Dorcas Society, health programs, social activities, etc.

We are glad for all these ministries of the Church, but an obvious question arises: Where are all these ministries going

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[1] See appendix.

to be conducted? Common sense would indicate that it is unwise for a congregation to promote ministries or activities for which it does not have adequate facilities.

The Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the concept of a proper place of worship in the context of the biblical data, the history of the Christian church, the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and current discussions on the issue. It is hoped that a broader understanding of this matter can help not only the church in Latin America but throughout the world to better face the challenge of providing adequate facilities for the accomplishment of the holistic mission of the church.

The Importance of the Project

It is anticipated that this project will enlighten many church leaders in Latin America who face the financial reality which confronts thousands of congregations daily: How can enough resources be acquired to build a place of worship for each congregation? In other words, the potential of this project is to have a better understanding of stewardship as related to the congregation and community by erecting buildings that will tell to the world that we as Seventh-day Adventist really care.

Another potential of this project is to help Adventists to grasp the theological issues related to the multi-purpose building, and to grasp the positive factor in the mission of the church rather than limit its ministries with a conventional church building.

Limitations of the Project

This is basically a theological-historical study. The concern behind this project is so obvious--the difficulty of providing adequate facilities for the fulfillment of the holistic mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America--that no attempt has been made to prove it with pertinent statistical data. Some limited and specific information was gathered from several countries. This is used as an illustration in some appropriate places but is not a major component of this project.

Reference to a few different types of places of worship is made in the last chapter. In the past twenty years many multi-purpose church buildings have been constructed in the United States. In reference to these, I am only using them as an example without making an attempt to cover all the representative ideas on the subject.

Organization of the Project

Chapter I surveys the biblical information on places of worship, including biblical and extra-biblical data on the synagogue.

Chapter II briefly evaluates the available evidences of Christian places of worship from the second to the fourth centuries.

Chapter III selectively surveys the history of places of worship utilized by some Christian denominations from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.

Chapter IV describes Ellen G. White's views on proper places of worship and chapter V deals with current trends on church buildings, with special emphasis on the multi-purpose building.

Chapter VI contains the summary, conclusions, and some recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER I

PLACES OF WORSHIP IN THE BIBLE

Theologians and philosophers try to teach us that religion finds its most universal expression in worship. From the beginning man has devoted time and dedicated places to worship God the Creator.

Sacred history, after a brief mention of God's activity in creation during six literal days, sabbath sanctification, and fall of man, describes the first human acts of worship.

Places of Worship in the Old Testament

Perhaps near the garden of Eden, the two sons of Adam and Eve presented their sacrifices in an act of worship (Gen 4:3, 4).[1]

After some information about the corruption of mankind, the mission of Noah, and the universal flood, the writer of Genesis pictures faithful Noah erecting an altar and presenting burnt offerings to the Lord (Gen 8:20). It is possible to say that these examples are a small picture of what in reality happened among the "sons of God" (Gen 6:2) who for several generations kept alive the idea of sacred offerings and worship to God.

According to Moses, Abram's first stop in the land of

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[1]Unless otherwise indicated, Biblical texts are quoted from the New American Standard Bible.

Canaan was Shechem, the plain of Moreh. "So he built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him" (Gen 12:6, 7). Years later, when Jacob was returning from the land of his ancestors, he camped near Shechem and "he erected there an altar" (Gen 33:20).

Bethel (Gen 12:8), Mamre (Gen 13:18), and Beersheba (Gen 21:33) are some of the other places where Abraham worshiped God. In none of these instances is there any mention of a tent, building, or something that encloses the place.

The Tabernacle

The tent constructed in the wilderness is called "the tent of reunion."[1] It is most commonly known as the tabernacle through the influence of the Vulgate. This is the only sanctuary that God explicitly commanded to be built. (Exod 25:1-8).

In relationship to all the instructions related to the Tabernacle, we have sometimes overlooked an important detail. After receiving the Ten Commandments and several ordinances, Moses was called to the mountain. He was told to bring with him Aaron, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel. There "they beheld God, and they ate and drank" (Exod 24:11). In other words, their lives were preserved and they feasted in the presence of the Lord. Could it be that this covenant meal was a shadow of the communal meal of the Christian community in our days?

It is necessary to remember that the sacred shrine was enclosed in an open space called the court. This court kept the

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[1] Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965), p. 294. See Exod 33:7.

people at a distance from the service of the sanctuary. The common people were allowed only to come to the door of the court of the tabernacle in order to offer their offerings and sacrifices.

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the Tabernacle was a "sand table" so they could understand the gospel, but at the same time it was never intended to be a model of a place of worship for the Christian Church.

Worship Sites in the Land of Israel (c.1400-c.1000 B.C.)

Gilgal was the first stopping place after the people of Israel crossed the Jordan River. According to the sacred writer, Gilgal was located "on the eastern edge of Jericho" (Josh 4:19), between Jericho and the River Jordan.

It is possible that the twelve stones that the children of Israel took from the river marked a new place of worship (Josh 4:20-23). At least it was at Gilgal that the people of Israel celebrated the first Passover in Canaan. There the new generation was circumcised. There the manna ceased to fall and the children of Israel began eating of the products of the land of Canaan (Josh 5:3-8, 11, 12).

Gilgal is mentioned again as one of the places of judgment in relationship with Samuel the great judge of Israel (1 Sam 7:16). Later the proclamation of the first king of Israel was made at Gilgal (1 Sam 11:15). We have no information about the kind, if any, of sanctuary that was built, but it is clear that the people of Israel continued to attend some sacred services in Gilgal. Later some prophets would speak against Gilgal (Hos 4:15; 19:15; Amos 4:4; 5:5).

During the difficult period of the history of Israel--called by some the "distressing days of the Judges,"[1] Gilgal was eclipsed by Shiloh as it became a central sanctuary for the twelve tribes of Israel. It is at Shiloh that the "tent of meeting" was set up. Every year thousands made a pilgrimage to Shiloh. Among them the sacred writer mentions Elkanah, the father of Samuel, as one of the faithful ones who went there every year "to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord" (1 Sam 1:3).

It appears that Mispah in Benjamin was another sanctuary (Judg 11:11; 1 Sam 7:5, 9, 16). It is also possible to indicate that Ophra (Judg 6:11-24), Dan (Judg 17, 18), Gibeon (2 Chr 1:3), and Nob (1 Sam 21:1) were small sanctuaries where the people of Israel used to worship the Creator.[2] Later Jerusalem would become the site of the most important sanctuary, beginning with David's reign, after the transfer of the ark to the city of Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12-19). Later still there was the erection of an altar on the threshing-floor of Araunah (2 Sam 24:16-25), site of the future temple.

The Temple

The writer of 2 Chronicles states:

> Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David prepared, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. (2 Chr 3:1)

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[1] Leon Wood, Distressing Days of the Judges (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 1.

[2] The Deuteronomic Code (12:1-26:19) indicates one place where the community of faith could meet together (Deut 12:11). Nevertheless it is possible to argue that the real question about chapter 12 is whether the emphasis is in centralization of worship or purity of worship.

The temple was a national sanctuary where both King and people, rich and poor, could offer praise and sacrifices to Jehovah. Many people came daily to the temple.[1] In its courts,[2] men could meet and perhaps hear the address of the prophet, as was the experience of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 26:2). Also in the court they could offer their private prayers and participate in the daily service as spectators or by offering their own sacrifices. There is evidence that worship[3] in the temple was a happy occasion for the children of Israel (Ps 87:7; 149:3; 150).

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[1]There is a description of the temple and its furnishings in 1 Kgs 6 and 7 and in 2 Chron 3 and 4.

[2]Perhaps the saddest part of the narrative of Solomon's Temple is the history of gross idolatry in the courts of the temple. It was the reform of Josiah that swept out of the temple courts all the evil practices that for generations took place among the professed people of God (2 Kgs 23:6, 7, 11, 12).

[3]Another three unofficial temples or sanctuaries must be mentioned in relation to the temple at Jerusalem. Beersheba was considered a religious center (Gen 21:31-34; 26:23-25; 46:1-5). Samuel's sons were judges at Beersheba (1 Sam 8:2).

At the time of Amos (c. 782-753 B.C.), Beersheba was compared with Dan and Bethel. Certainly the city had a sanctuary where pilgrims could find their place of worship. See "Beersheba," Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary, edited by Siegfried H. Horn (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1960), pp. 125, 126.

At the excavations in Beersheba in 1976, Yohanan Aharoni found a large public building that was identified with the Beersheba temple. Aharoni suggested "that the Beer-sheba temple served as a border sanctuary in the period of the monarchy." This temple shows a strong Egyptian influence, and perhaps this was the reason that the prophet Amos denounced the worship in Beersheba (Amos 5:5; 8:14). See Keith N. Schoville, Biblical Archaeology in Focus (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), pp. 315-21.

From the Elepantine papyri, we know about the existence of a Jewish temple on the island of Yeb. This temple was built by Jews before the invasion of Cambyses to Egypt in 525 B.C. It was destroyed around 410 B.C. See S. H. Horn, The Spade Confirms the Book (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1957), pp. 108-15.

From Josephus (Ant. 133.1,2) we know about the existence of another Jewish temple in Leontopolis (Egypt). The temple was founded around 160 B.C. and remained standing until A.D. 73, when it was destroyed by the Romans. See de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 341-42.

The great Temple of Solomon came to its end in 586 B.C. It is possible that after the Babylonian exile, the reconstruction of the temple followed the same plan as Solomon's temple. The truth is that we do not know much about this temple. Josephus, quoting from Hecateus of Addera (fourth century B.C.), wrote that the temple "was a large building encircled by a wall."[1]

Some Conclusions

There is only limited information available about places of worship in the Old Testament.

With the building of the tabernacle and later the temple, a complete description is provided for the first time of the system of worship, including the daily, weekly, monthly, and annual services. Nevertheless several questions remain unanswered. What part did children have in worship? What was the participation of young people and women in the sacred services? Where and how did people worship daily, weekly, monthly beyond Jerusalem?[2]

Places of Worship in the New Testament

The New Testament opens before us three kinds of places of worship. All of them were full of vitality and were well perceived by the people. The temple and the synagogue were well-established institutions when the first century A.D. arrived, and by the middle

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[1] de Vaux, p. 324.

[2] Perhaps these questions can be answered by saying that the home was the only possible place for daily and weekly family worship. Maybe the father fulfilled his function as the priest of the family by calling his family to worship each day and during the Sabbath day. The assumption is that the synagogue is an institution born in or after the Babylonian exile. The Old Testament is silent in this matter.

of the century the house church was also well established among the Christian people.

The Temple of Herod

The temple of Herod is even today called the second temple by the Jewish people. Its construction began by the year 20 B.C. under Herod the Great. The old structure was replaced by a new one. Within "a year and a half the new temple was completed,"[1] but the work of embellishment and enlargement of the temple area went on "until the procuratorship of Albinus (c. A.D. 62-64), immediately before the outbreak of the Jewish war."[2]

The floor plan of the temple maintained the old three parts configuration: the porch (1 Kgs 6:3), the holy place, and the holy of holies. Many side rooms completed the building. These rooms were used for the storage of sacred objects belonging to the temple.

Around this sacred building was a series of courts. The larger one was called "Har Habait" with the idea of "the court encircling the House."[3] This court encircled all the temple area. According to some authors this court covered "a quarter of a square mile"[4] or "near 400 yards north-south by 330 yards east-west."[5] This area was called the "court of the Gentiles" because everyone

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[1]Donald E. Gowan, Bridge between the Testaments (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1976), p. 252.

[2]"Temple," Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary (1960), p. 1077.

[3]Solomon Zeitlin, "The Temple and Worship," JQR 51 (1960-1961):209.

[4]Ibid., p. 210.

[5]Gowan, p. 255.

had the privilege of entering this area, both Jews and non-Jews. This place was a site of great activity. According to the Gospels, this was the place where animals for sacrifice could be purchased or money could be changed. This is the place where the "cleansing of the temple" by Jesus Christ took place. It was a popular meeting place and was perhaps used also as a short cut to go from one side of the city to the other.[1]

A low wall separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Women. On these walls, by the gates, in the Roman period, slabs were placed warning Gentiles not to pass any further under penalty of death.

The Court of the Women was to the east of the temple. Here men and women were allowed to enter. "Fifteen steps upward was the Azarah of men."[2] This court was more sacred than the Court of the Women, and no women were allowed to enter the Court of Men. Beyond this was the Court of the Priests, where only the priests could enter. In this court was the altar of sacrifice and the laver.

Further to the west were the twelve steps that "led up from the Court of the Priests to the vestibule of the Temple building."[3] Here was the gate of the Porch and another door separating the Porch from the Holy Place; then there was a rich veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The golden altar, or altar of incense; the menorah or candlestick

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[1]Gowan, p. 256.

[2]Zeitlin, p. 210.

[3]"Temple," Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary (1960), p. 1079.

with seven branches, and the table for the shewbread were in the Holy Place. The Holy of Holies was empty.

Jesus' Attitude toward the Temple

The Gospel according to John indicates that Jesus Christ was often in the city of Jerusalem and in the temple courts. John indicates also that Christ's public ministry began with the cleansing of the temple, properly the Court of the Gentiles (John 2:14, 15). This incident is called by many the first cleansing of the temple and is not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels. It was on this memorable occasion that Jesus proclaimed that the temple in Jerusalem was "His Father's house" and that it had been made by the dealers a "house of merchandise" (John 2:16).

It is important to notice in this text that the objection of Christ "is not to their dishonesty, but to their presence."[1] In other words, Jesus' action was not an attack on the sacrificial system. His deep concern was for the respect due to his Father's house, and for those Jews or Gentiles who wished to pray or worship in peace in the Court of the Gentiles.

It appears that when Jesus visited the temple he went primarily to proclaim his message of salvation to the people. It was in the Court of the Gentiles where he could meet both Jews and Greeks, saints and sinners with the good news.

The four Gospels are unanimous in indicating that Jesus used the temple's courts to teach the people (Matt 26:55; Mark 12:35;

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[1]Leon Morris, The Gospel according to John, NICNT, 11 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1971), 4:195.

14:49; Luke 20:1; 21:37, 38; 22:52, 53; John 7:14, 28; 8:2, 20; 18:20). It is John's Gospel that adds a little detail which indicates the exact place where Jesus sometimes taught. John writes: "These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple . . . (John 8:20)." Presumably, this was the Court of the Women,[1] a more restricted place where teaching could take place in quieter surroundings.

It is also John who depicts Jesus just walking, admiring, and surely engaging in pleasant memories at the colonnade called "the portico of Solomon" (John 10:23).

On the other hand, neither the Synoptics nor John mention any participation of Jesus in the temple service itself. John emphasizes that Jesus followed the practice of the religious men of his day by going up to Jerusalem to observe the national festivals such as the Passover (John 2:23; 6:4; 12:1; 13:1), the Feast of the Jews (John 5:1), and the Feast of the Tabernacles (John 7:2). However, neither John nor the Synoptics indicate that Jesus or his disciples offered any sacrifice in the temple. Matthew records that in a discussion with his opponents, Jesus emphasized the words of the prophet Hosea: "I desire compassion, and not sacrifice. . ." (Matt 9:13).

If some recognition of the temple service and its priesthood is to be found in the Gospel narrative it is perhaps in the incident with the leper whom Jesus cleansed, and to whom he said

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[1]See Mishnah Shekalim 4:4-6 and Pesahim 5:10. Cf. "Court of the Women," [John 8:20], SDA Bible Commentary, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1953-57), 5:988.

". . . go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for testimony to them" (Mark 1:44). This is the only recorded positive saying of Jesus in reference to the priests and special offerings. However, the last phrase, "for testimony to them," could be understood as an intended criticism of the unbelieving priests.

Jesus clearly criticized the priests and Levites in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) and in comments he made about some common practices such as the Corban (Mark 7:9-13). Oaths and promises based on the gold of the temple (Matt 23:16, 17) were also condemned by Jesus Christ.

The statement Jesus made to the Samaritan woman "an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father" (John 4:21) is studied in more detail at the end of this chapter.

Jesus' attitude toward the temple and its worship was expressed most vividly in his sayings concerning the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple and his final action in the Court of the Gentiles.

The Temple was the great pride of all Jews, including the disciples of Jesus. Leaving the temple court, one disciple said to Christ, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" (Mark 13:1). Certainly waiting for some expression of admiration and appreciation for the magnificent buildings, the disciples were shocked when the Master answered: "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down" (Mark 13:2). The double negative

which occurs in the text suggests total destruction, and the expression "not one stone" removes any possible misconception about the extent of the desolation envisioned.

As noted above, Jesus called the temple "my house" (Matt 21:13) or "my Father's house" (John 2:16). Now in his last words, it is no more "my house" or "my Father's house," but "your house is being left to you desolate!" (Matt 23:38). In the words of the Chronicler it is stated: "Because you have forsaken the Lord, He has also forsaken you" (2 Chron 24:20). The day of those glorious buildings were numbered, and all their glory would soon be only sad history and a warning to all mankind.

The Church and the Temple

According to Luke, after Christ's ascension the first Christian congregation in Jerusalem continued "day by day . . . with one mind in the temple. . ." (Acts 2:46). This suggests that the first Christians loved the temple service and were eager to be nurtured by the religious services of the temple. It also seems to indicate that they had not forsaken the religion of their fathers and were not seeking a break with traditional Jewish religion.

Undoubtedly this spirit of worship was coupled with the hope of seeing some other Jews won to the Gospel message, because they were convinced that Christianity was the real and true Judaism.

On the other hand, "day by day in the temple" could simply mean that the Christians used some of the courts of the temple as meeting places. It should be remembered that the temple courts were freely open to all Israelites.

"Solomon's portico" (Acts 3:11; 5:12) appears to have been a place that brought dear memories to the early Christians because in this same portico Jesus had preached to the people at the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22, 23) only a few months before.

Luke ends his Gospel with a note of triumph and joy saying, "And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising God" (Luke 24:52, 53). This text indicates that the disciples made use of every opportunity to go and worship in the temple. In Acts, Luke says that "Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer" (Acts 3:1). It seems that the apostles continued to live as observant Israelites, going up to the temple for the service of prayer which accompanied the evening sacrifice.

All this joyful participation of the apostles and Christian believers in the temple's services gave them an opportunity to teach and evangelize those who came to the magnificent courts of the temple (Acts 4:1; 5:20, 21, 25, 42).

The Synagogue

The first Christians were Jews. Christianity came out of Judaism. It is not surprising to discover in the New Testament that the early church worshiped from the beginning in the Temple area and possible also in the synagogues of Jerusalem.[1] It is also no surprise that this very remarkable institution, the synagogue

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[1]According to the Talmud (TJ Meg. 3:1) the number of synagogues in Jerusalem at the time of the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, were 480. Another quotation (TB Ket. 105a) indicates that the number was 394.

has influenced Christian worship for nearly 2000 years.

The Term Synagogue

Synagogue is the name applied today to the place of meeting used by Jewish communities for the purpose of public worship.

The Greek term συναγωγή in its basic sense means leading, bringing together, and this can be "persons or things."[1] It is a word used "commonly in the sense of the gathering or periodic meetings" as "the imperial cult" and sometimes "in honor of the board of a guild."[2] Generally speaking the term συναγωγή in secular Greek was used predominantly for the "festive assembly or meeting, whether cultic or not."[3] In many instances the term συναγωγή is close to συναγώγιον, "picnic or feast."[4]

In the Septuagint, the main idea of συναγωγή is "coming together" or "to assemble for cultic celebration, judgment, or war,"[5] and with few exceptions the reference is to all male citizens. Συναγωγή also means the "whole congregation of Israel."[6] The Old Testament apocrypha begins to shift the use of the term to a "local congregation" as seen in Susana 28 and Sirach 4:7. Finally, in the Septuagint the term synagogue is never viewed as a building.

Among the Greek-speaking Jews, as with the apocrypha writers, the term συναγωγή "is the individual synagogal congregation, rather than the total community."[7] Among the Jews of New Testament

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[1]Wolfgang Schrage, "συναγωγή," TDNT (1971), 7:779.

[2]Ibid. [3]Ibid., p. 801. [4]Ibid., p. 802.

[5]Ibid., p. 804. [6]Ibid., p. 806. [7]Ibid.

times, it is just the "house of meeting."[1]

Another Greek name for synagogue is προσευχή which occurs in 3 Maccabees 7:20; Acts 16:13, and specially in Philo, with the idea of "place of prayer."[2] According to Josephus, in the edict of Emperor Augustus, "the synagogue is called σαββατεῖον, or house of the Sabbath-keeping."[3]

Origin of the Synagogue

The very beginning of the synagogue, whether in Palestine or among the Jews in exile (diaspora), is involved in complete obscurity. The Encyclopaedia Judaica has this to say about the origin of the synagogue:

> As its birth is lost in the mists of antiquity and apparently took place unheralded, so it grew to maturity in conditions of obscurity, and makes its definitive appearance about the first century of the Christian era as a fully grown and firmly established institution.[4]

By the beginning of the first century A.D., the synagogue,[5] was a well-established institution, not only in Jerusalem, but around the Mediterranean world, as the New Testament testifies.

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[1] Ibid., p. 807.

[2] "Synagogue," Dictionary of the Bible (1911), 4:636.

[3] Josephus Antiquities of the Jews 16.6.2 (trans. William Whiston, Kregel Publications, 344).

[4] "Synagogue," Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971 ed., 15:580.

[5] Some take the position that Ps 74:8 is an indication of an early origin of the synagogue. Nevertheless, the R.S.V. and N.A.S.B. translate this text as "meeting places." Perhaps these meeting places were the "old country sanctuaries" of Israel. See Donald E. Gowan, Bridge between the Testaments (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1976), p. 280. H. H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, Its Forms and Meaning (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 214-27. A. A. Anderson, The Book of Psalms, NCBC, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1972), p. 541.

Functions of the synagogue. There are three names for the synagogue in Hebrew: Bet Tefilah, House of Prayer; Bet Hamidrash, House of Study; and Bet Haknesset, House of Assembly. Rabbi Azriel Eisenberg reminds us that the "word used today for the Parliament of Israel is Knesset."[1] The different names suggest that the synagogue has been a center for communal life, worship, and education.

The Synagogue as Center of Communal Life

Josephus mentioned that the proseuche of Tiberias was a large building "in which a general assembly of the town was held."[2] He also records that rebel Jews met in the Great Synagogue in Tiberias to plan the uprising against Rome.[3]

Philo states that the great Jewish population of Alexandria had many synagogues, but he emphasizes that in the Great Synagogue the "various craft guilds sat together. . . ."[4] According to Krauss Altert, "the great basilica at Alexandria was not primarily a synagogue but a market-hall used for communal purposes as well as worship."[5]

The synagogue was also used as a court for the administration

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[1]Azriel Eisenberg, The Synagogue through the Ages (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1974), p. 62.

[2]"Synagogue," Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971 ed., 15:582.

[3]Eisenberg, p. 67.

[4]Philo, Legatione ad Gaium 13:2, cited in The Encyclopaedia Judaica (New York: Macmillan Co., 1971), 15:582.

[5]Krauss Altert, quoted by Wolfgang Schrage, "συναγωγή," TDNT (1971), 7:821.

of justice. According to the words of our Lord, "When they bring you before the synagogue . . . do not become anxious about how or what you should speak in your defense, or what you should say" (Luke 12:11). These words of Jesus refer to judgment, to prove or defend something before the authorities of the synagogue. But the Master went further and said: "But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues" (Matt 10:17).

The Mishnah provides the following information about scourging:

> How do they scourge him? They bind his two hands to a pillar on either side, and the minister of the Synagogue lays hold on his garments--if they are torn they are torn, if they are utterly rent they are utterly rent--so that he bares his chest. A stone is set down behind him on which the minister of the Synagogue stands with a strap of calf-hide in hand, doubled and re-doubled, and two (other) straps that rise and fall (are fastened) thereto. The handpiece of the strap is one hand-breadth long and one hand-breadth wide; and its end must reach to his navel. He gives him one-third of the stripes in the front (on the chest) and two-thirds behind (on that part of the shoulders that is bared); and he may not strike him when he is standing or when he is sitting but only when he is bending low for it is writen, the judge shall cause him to lie down. And he that smites, smites with his one hand with all his might. (Makkoth 3:12, 13)

It is clear that the hazzan or minister of the synagogue was the person who administered the floggings in accordance with the judgment of the court. The law of Moses provided for flogging (Deut 25:1-3) and forty stripes was the maximum penalty. The apostle Paul reminds us that "Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes" (2 Cor 11:24). Later, Tertullian called the Jewish synagogues "fountains of persecution."[1]

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[1] "Synagogues as fountains of persecution," Acts 4:11, SDA Bible Commentary, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1953-1957), 6:438.

According to the Talmud the synagogue serves as:

1. A place to set public affairs in order (b Ket. 5a).

2. A public mourning place for the dead (Tos. Meg., 3,7). For example, according to the Midrash Rabbah, at the death of Rabbi Judah ha Nasi, "All the cities assembled for mourning over the Rabbi. They set his body down in eighteen Synagogues. . ." (Eccles Rabbah 7:12, Midrash Rabbah).

3. A place for announcements about articles lost and found, and thefts (b B.M. 28b).

4. A place to shelter and feed the poor (b Pes. 101a). Rabbi Abba b. Kahana said, "It is related that a certain company of servants at Kefar Hattaya used to eat and drink in the Synagogue every Friday towards evening" (Gen. Rabbah 65:15, 16 Midrash Rabbah).

5. A place where public decisions and announcements regarding voluntary almsgiving were made (b Yeb., 65b). "Rabbi Hiyya b. Abba instituted that charity contributions should be made in the House of Study in Tiberias" (Lev 5:4. Midrash Rabbah).

6. A place for judicial investigations (b Yeb., 65b).

7. A common place in order to resolve problems of divorce of a childless woman (b Yeb., 65b).

8. A place where oaths were taken (Shebu 4:10).

9. Hospices for Jews from abroad (j Meg., 3:5).

A. Thomas Kraabel makes reference to ruins of synagogues unearthed by archeologists and suggests that they help to provide evidence as to the role of these synagogues "in the social system of a gentile town or city."[1]

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[1]Thomas Kraabel, "Social Systems of Six Diaspora Synagogues,"

He refers specially to synagogues in six ancient sites:

1. Sardis (Asia Minor), second or third century A.D. to 616.

2. Priene (Asia Minor), third or fourth century A.D.

3. Dura (Syria), second century A.D. to 256.

4. Delos (Aegean Island), first century B.C. to second century A.D.

5. Ostia (Italy), earlier synagogue: first century A.D. (?); later synagogue: fourth century A.D.

6. Stobi (Macedonia), Polycharmos synagogue: third century A.D. Later synagogue by fourth century A.D.

Of these the Sardis synagogue was the largest, and apparently "all community activities took place in the synagogue itself."[1] Probably the same happened with the synagogue in Ostia. On the other hand, Dura, Priene, and Delos were converted residences. The faithful Jews first met in homes, and then one home was converted for community use. The earlier synagogue at Stobi was donated by Polycharmos, and he and his family lived in the "upper room" of the building.

So these synagogues appear to be also community centers. They were perhaps the only place where the Jewish community in each city or town assembled "in accordance with their ancestral laws and . . . decided their own business and resolved their differences."[2]

The Synagogue as a School

As mentioned above, the synagogue was also known as a "House of Study," a school for adults and children. Philo calls

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in Ancient Synagogues. The State of Research, ed. Joseph Gutmann (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1981), p. 79.

[1] Ibid., p. 81. [2] Ibid., p. 82.

the synagogue a school where the Torah was the principal and many times the sole subject of study.[1]

The term bet ha-midrash, that could be translated as "the place where the students gather to listen to Midrash or exposition of the Torah,"[2] is used in contradistinction to the term bet ha-sefer,[3] the elementary school where children under thirteen years of age went to learn the Scriptures.

The origin of the school for adults, known as bet ha-midrash, can probably be seen in the injunction of Yose ben Joezer (early second century B.C.): "Let thy house be a regular meeting place for learned men."[4]

The term bet ha-midrash occurs for the first time in Ben Sira "about the beginning of the second century B.C.E., and may freely be translated in that context as lecture hall."[5]

The elementary school "was first introduced by Simeon ben Shetah about the year 100 B.C.E. at Jerusalem."[6] Later, by the first century A.D., Joshua ben Gamala introduced the elementary school for the benefit of all children. The subjects that were taught at the bet ha-midrash can be summarized in three words: Midrash, Halakhah, and Haggadah.[7]

The training of the children in the Torah started very

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[1]Philo Vita Mosis 11:39, cited by H. H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Forms and Meaning (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 229.

[2]Israel M. Goldman, Lifelong Learning among Jews (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1975), p. 24.

[3]Ibid. [4]Ibid., p. 24. [5]Ibid., p. 25.

[6]Ibid., p. 24. [7]Ibid., p. 25.

early. From the time they could speak, children at home were taught to recite the Shema. The mother of one great Rabbi, Joshua ben Hanania, "is said to have brought his cradle to the synagogue school so that he could absorb Torah from his earliest years."[1]

At first children learned the alphabet. Soon after they began to study the book of Leviticus, and so they continued until they mastered the whole Torah. This level of teaching was called Mikra, which denoted the study of Scriptures.[2]

Sometimes it is difficult to make a difference between synagogues and houses of study. Some passages of Midrash give the idea that in some synagogues there were special rooms for educating the children and adults, and in other cases the school and the synagogue were the same. According to b Meg., 26b, 27a "the school house was more holy than the synagogue, since the later might be changed into the former but not vice versa."[3]

So important were the synagogue and the house of study that Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said:

> Whosoever enters synagogues and houses of study in this world will be privileged to enter synagogues and houses of study in the time to come. (Lamentations 7:1, Midrash Rabbah)

Unfortunately the information about the elementary school is so meager that any attempt to describe it is unproductive.

The Synagogue as a Place of Worship

Worship in the synagogue was wholly spiritual. Here attention was directed to no ritual act of sacrifice but "to lifting

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[1] Eisenberg, p. 67.

[2] Goldman, p. 27.

[3] Ibid., p. 26.

of men's thoughts to God and his word and the prostrating of the soul before him in adoration and prayer";[1] in other words "a rational worship without sacrifice or offering."[2] Another characteristic of the worship in the synagogue was its simplicity.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to emphasize that the synagogue is not at root a place of worship but a school, therefore the rabbi is not a priest but a teacher. However, the rabbi preaches because he knows the Scriptures.

The synagogue was not a temple, therefore Gentiles were not excluded from its religious services. The synagogue had no regular minister to expound the Scriptures. Any member of the community or even a passing stranger, like Paul (Acts 13:14-43), could expound the sacred writings. The religious service of the synagogue was independent from the priesthood; it was dependent on the congregation itself.

The gathering of ten men for prayer and Torah reading was sufficient to establish a synagogue. Therefore, it is possible to indicate that synagogue worship was a male religious service. Women and children, however, were among the congregation. When Paul went to the synagogue in Thessalonica, many important women were attracted by his words (Acts 17:1-4).

Unfortunately not much is known about the synagogue liturgy before A.D. 70. Indeed, the meager information in the Gospel of Luke (4:15-21) is the only available contemporary information

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[1] Rowley, p. 240.

[2] George Footmoore, Judaism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), 1:284.

about worship in the synagogue. However, it is possible that in the time of Jesus there was a fixed liturgy followed later by the rabbinical writers of the early Christian centuries.

When Jerusalem fell and the beautiful temple went up in flames, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai gathered scholars and disciples around him in the little town of Yavneh. There he proclaimed that "the utterance of prayer, the study of Torah, and the performance of good deeds were as acceptable to God as the sacrifice on the temple."[1] In this way he and his disciples "succeeded in transferring much of the authority, prestige, and function of the temple ritual to the synagogue service."[2]

To this effect, "the times when the sacrifices were offered at the temple were regarded as especially propitious for prayer."[3]

Near the end of the first century (c. A.D. 90), Rabbi Gamaliel II succeeded Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, and under his firm leadership the synagogue service took a definitive shape. The synagogue opened three times a day, because the Bible speaks of three daily prayer services. The psalmist prayed "evening and morning and at noon" (Ps 55:17), and Daniel the prophet prayed "three times a day" (Dan 6:11).

By the end of the first century the synagogue had some order of service that consisted of:

(1) The Shema and its benedictions, (2) the Tefillah,

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[1]Agraham E. Milgram, Jewish Worship (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), p. 81.

[2]Milgram, p. 82. [3]Ibid., p. 84.

which is basically a series of personal and national supplications, and (3) readings from the Scriptures, often accompanied by homilies.[1]

Certain types of leaders of the synagogue are known from the early days. The Gospels mention two kinds. The ruler or rulers (Mark 5:22; Acts 13:15), known in Greek as archisynagogos, and the minister (Luke 4:20), called in Hebrew hazzan. The ruler or rulers were responsible for conducting the religious service; the minister was an assistant to the ruler.

Every day the synagogue opened three times for those who wished to come and pray, but Sabbath was the most important day of worship. Generally speaking, the total Jewish community came to the main service of the week. According to the Mishnah (c. A.D. 10-200), the worship service in the synagogue was as follows:

The Shema
Prayer and benedictions
Reading of the Torah with translations
Reading of the Prophets with translations
Sermon or Midrash
Blessing or prayer.[2]

It is possible also that this order of service was generally followed during the Talmudic and Geonic periods (c. A.D. 200-1050).

The Attitude of Jesus toward the Synagogue

Jesus at first appears to fit into the framework of the synagogue worship. He joins in the meetings at the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mark 1:29; Matt 9:35; John 18:20), not only in Galilee but also in Judea (Luke 4:44). It was the custom of Jesus to attend the synagogue service and to teach (Matt 4:23; 9:25;

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[1] Ibid., p. 90.

[2] Mishnah, Megilla 6.

13:54; Mark 1:21; 6:2; John 6:59; 18:20), preach (Mark 1:39; Luke 4:16, 44), and sometimes heal someone (Matt 12:10-13; Mark 1:23-25; Luke 4:33-35), according to the testimony of the Gospels.

Some of his encounters with his hard opponents took place in the synagogue (Matt 12:9-14; Luke 13:10-17). It was in the synagogue that the first public battle between demonic powers and the Son of God took place, resulting in Jesus' victory over the evil powers and in his being called "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:23-27).

The Gospels do not register any criticism or attack on the institutions called synagogues. There is, on the other hand, sharp criticism of the misuse of the synagogue by the pharisees and scribes (Mark 12:38-40; Matt 6:5). Finally, in his eschatological discourse, the Lord warned his disciples of the role that the synagogue would play in the near future as places of confrontation and punishment for those who confessed the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 23:34; Mark 13:9; Luke 21:12).

The Church and the Synagogue

It is clear from the book of Acts, that the earliest Christians kept their devotions not only to the temple but also to the synagogue.

However, the synagogue did not adequately serve the needs of the Church worship and fellowship. The preaching of Christ resurrected, the practice of the Lord's Supper, and the coming of Gentiles to the new faith widened very quickly the gulf between the synagogue and the Church. Finally the Christian community had to

free itself from "any geographical center and . . . any existing institution,"[1] because the worship which belonged to the new kingdom which had come in the person of Jesus (Luke 17:21) was fundamentally different from that of Israel.

Perhaps it is possible to outline the steps by which the ekklesia gradually broke its connections with Judaism (i.e., temple, synagogue, and ceremonial laws) and finally became an independent Christian movement.

It was Stephen's ministry and preaching that gave the first signs that temple worship and ceremonies were no longer necessary for those who became Christians. Stephen went further to say that "the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands" (Acts 7:48).

A second step was taken when Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit, brought the gospel to Cornelius and his household and ate with them, and "the Holy Spirit fell upon those who were listening to the message. . ." (Acts 10:44). This example was used by Peter himself during the first Council of the Christian Church in Jerusalem in order to help free the Gentiles from ceremonial obligations (Acts 15).

Finally, in the book of Acts, after using the first fifteen chapters to show the development of the ekklesia, Luke describes in the last thirteen chapters how the ekklesia and the synagogue went their separate ways, because most of the Jewish people rejected

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[1] Floy V. Filson, "The Temple, Synagogue, and Church," The Biblical Archaeologist 7 (1944):87.

the Gospel message (Acts 17:5-8; 18:6, 12; 19:8, 9; 21:27-32; 22:22; 23:12, 13; 28:24-29).[1]

The House Church

The church began as a family, and as a family the first meeting of the believers after the crucifixion took place, apparently, in a home, behind closed doors, "for fear of the Jews" (John 20:19). Forty days later, the group of disciples went to the "upper room" (Acts 1:13) in a private dwelling, where they stayed at least for a period of ten days until all were "clothed with the power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

Luke wrote:

> So them, those who had received his words were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
> And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
> And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.
> And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common.
> And they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.
> And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,
> Praising God, and having favor with all people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:41-47)

According to the picture provided by Luke, the newborn church at Jerusalem was, at the beginning, like a family. Luke adds:

> And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property of them. (Acts 4:32)

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[1] See William Horbury, "The Benediction of the Minim and Early Jewish-Christian Controversy," JTS 33 (1982):19.

Yet the surrender of lands, homes, and goods into the common treasury was entirely voluntary. Some members of the church may have kept their own homes (Acts 12:12). The book of Acts pictures the Christian congregation as:

> Continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer . . . from house to house . . . taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart. (Acts 2:42, 46)

Probably, the idea of breaking bread and prayer denotes something more than eating together. It is possible that the observance of the Lord's Supper is also indicated. And if it were so, the privacy of the home was an ideal place not only for fellowship and prayer but also for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, this perhaps being celebrated more often than once a week.

Luke also states that the home of Mary was often used for the purpose of prayer meeting (Acts 1:12). It is possible that several private houses served as gathering places for the Jerusalem community that was growing each day.

House Churches Outside of Jerusalem

When "a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem" (Acts 8:2), the community of believers was scattered in the regions of Judea and Samaria, but as they traveled to different towns or cities "they went preaching the word . . . proclaiming Christ" (Acts 8:4). Though we have no information about the places of worship in Judea or Samaria, it is possible to assume that new believers opened their homes for worship and prayer meetings, and that the synagogue took the place of the temple.

When the church expanded beyond the limits of Palestine, to the cities of Antioch, Damascus, Iconium, Lystra, Corinth, and Rome, these daughter churches followed the example of the mother church in Jerusalem. The believers gathered together in private homes to celebrate the Lord's Supper, to pray, and to worship together.

The book of Acts and the Epistles contain several references to house churches. In the city of Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla opened their home to the community for worship (1 Cor 16:19). In Colossae, the home of Philemon served as a church (Phlm 2). In the city of Laodicea, Nymphas opened the doors of his home and welcomed the believers (Col 4:15). In Athens the rich home of Justus appears to have hosted the church (Acts 18:7). The same seems to have been true of Gaius in Corinth (Rom 16:23). In Troas, a third-story "upper chamber" served at least once as a Christian meeting place (Acts 20:6-12).

At the close of the letter to the Romans, Paul sends greetings to what could be interpreted as three or perhaps even five groups of church members gathered together around certain leaders whom he names: "Greet Prisca and Aquila . . . also the church that is in their house" (Rom 16:3-5); "Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them" (Rom 16:14); "Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them" (Rom 16:15).

Beside these three groups of church members in Rome, some scholars see two more in Paul's greetings to "those of the household

of Aristobulus" (Rom 16:10), and to "those who are of the household of Narcissus" (Rom 16:11).

With reference to households some think that the term could apply to slaves that belong to the family; on the other hand, we find the term used five times in the New Testament in order to indicate a baptism of the whole family (Acts 10:44-48; 16:15; 30-34; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16) that gave, as a result, a house church.

House-Church Remains from the First Century

Two possible remains of house church have come to light from the first century. The first one comes from the house that belonged to Gaius Petronius Stephanus in the town of Herculaneum, Italy. The frescoes that adorned the house show that the owner was not a Christian. After the death of Stephanus, Caltoria, his widow, had fallen on hard times.

The first floor of her house was divided into two apartments. In the same floor, one small room was apparently dedicated as a chapel, as suggested by the "sizeable cross"[1] clearly seen in one of the plaster walls. If the chapel did not belong to the owner of the house perhaps it was used by another freeman "Marcus Helvius Eros . . . who seems to have been the tenant of the other flat."[2] His personal seal was discovered in one of the adjoining rooms of the chapel.

Another example comes from the house of Paquius Proculus

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[1]Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), p. 214.

[2]Ibid., p. 215.

in the Via dell' Abondanza at Pompeii. This was an upper middle-class home. Many interesting mosaics beautified the walls of the house. Michael Green describes one of the mosaics as follows:

> The central plaque of this group depicts a face: taken on its own it might indicate anyone. But taken in connection with the adjoining plaques it evidently signifies Jesus. For on the left are two crossed fishes, and on the right a lamb.[1]

Other Early Christian Meeting Places

In the city of Ephesus, after three months dedicated to reasoning and offering the good news to the Jews and in the face of Jewish opposition in the synagogue, Paul was forced for the sake of his disciples to rent or borrow the "school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9). Certainly the "school" was possibly a secular lecture hall used perhaps for other public meetings also. Who Tyrannus was, what school he represented, or how Paul gained access to the school we are not told.

According to a Western reading, Paul taught each day in the School of Tyrannus "from the fifth to the tenth hour. This would be from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m."[2]

For two years Paul taught and preached in Ephesus, "so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10).

The book of Acts concludes with the apostle Paul as a favored prisoner "in his rented quarters" exercising his ministry

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[1] Ibid., p. 218.

[2] T. C. Smith, Acts, The Broadman Bible Commentary, 12 vols. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1970), 10:111.

of teaching and preaching "concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered" (Acts 28:30, 31).

The Meaning of Ekklesia

In secular Greek and etymologically, the word ekklesia is derived from ek and kaleo and meant "to call out."[1] It was used to call the citizens of the polis in order to study, discuss, and define the internal and external policy of the city.

The word ekklesia had political and judicial overtones, because it was the assembly of all citizens with clear purpose in mind in order to guide the community in their national and international affairs.[2] Many times this assembly "opened with prayers and sacrifices to the gods of the city."[3]

Although the term ekklesia became a distinctively Christian word, it has a long history in classical Greek and in the Old Testament. It was adopted by the translators of the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word קָהָל (qahal), with the meaning of assembly, and עֵדָה (edhah), with the idea of congregation.

The word ekklesia can be properly translated as assembly, meeting, and congregation. On the other hand, the English word "church" and the Scottish word "kirk" appear to derive from kuriakon, which means "that which belongs to the Lord."[4] In Christian history the term ekklesia prevails due more to religious

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[1] L. Coenen, "Church, Synagogue," DNTT (1979), 1:291.

[2] P. S. Minear, "Idea of Church," IDB (1962), 1:607.

[3] Coenen, p. 291.

[4] Donald G. Miller, The People of God (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 12.

associations than to philosophical origins.

H. A. Dana points out that in the classical usage of the word ekklesia, we find

> . . . four elements pertinent to its New Testament meaning: (i) the assembly was local; (ii) it was autonomous; (iii) it presupposed definite qualifications; and (iv) it was conducted on democratic principles.[1]

It must be emphasized that in the New Testament ekklesia does not mean a building but the congregation, the people, the believers; the idea of ekklesia as a building is foreign to the New Testament. George E. Ladd wrote: "Ekklesia is never used of a building as in the English word 'church'."[2]

In the New Testament the word ekklesia is used in a gradual crescendo in order to indicate: (1) a domestic congregation (1 Cor 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phlm 2); (2) a group of Christian believers in a given place or city that could, presumably, include at times several domestic congregations (Acts 5:11; 1 Cor 11:18); (3) the whole body of Christians (Matt 16:18; 1 Cor 10:32; 12:28); and (4) not only the faithful ones here on earth but also the heavenly body of faithful ones (Col 1:18-20; Heb 12:22-24).

The word ekklesia appears 112 times in the New Testament. It is absent from Mark, Luke, John, 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 and 2 Peter, 1 and 2 John, and Jude.

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[1]H. A. Dana, A Manual of Ecclesiology (Kansas City: Central Seminary, 1944), p. 26.

[2]George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1974), p. 537.

Liberation from Traditions

A chapter on places of worship in the New Testament cannot be closed without a careful examination of Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman, according to John 4:19-26.

In order to avoid unnecessary confrontation with the Pharisees, Jesus left Judea and went to Galilee. He used the short route, passing through the territory of Samaria.

Near the city of Sychar[1] was Jacob's well. "It was about the sixth hour" (vs. 6) when a woman from the city of Sychar came to draw water from the well. While she was drawing water, she purposely ignored the presence of Jesus, but in order to win her confidence the Master asked of her a favor. Nevertheless, racial hatred[2] prevailed for a little while, until Jesus offered her living waters.

In order to awaken her thirst for this living water, the consciousness of her sins needed to be awakened also, so Jesus asked her to call her husband (vs. 16). She answered "I have no husband" (vs. 17) and Jesus finished what she had begun, saying: "You have well said, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands and the one whom you now have is not your husband. . ." (vss. 17, 18).

Confronted by Jesus' knowledge of her former and present life the woman was forced to acknowledge that Jesus was a prophet

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[1]Some suggest that the city was Shechem. See Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1971), p. 257.

[2]For the origin of the antipathy between Jews and Samaritans, see Ezra 4:1-3, 17-23; Neh 2:10; 4:1, 2. Also Josephus, Antiquities xx.6.2.

(vs. 19). By her reply she virtually confessed what Jesus had said. It should be noticed that she used the term a prophet,[1] not the prophet but one who had special powers of insight.

There are several opinions with respect to vs. 20. Some authors[2] look to this text as a clever device to divert the conversation in order to avoid painful memories. Others go to the opposite extreme and see in the woman's reply an indication of her desire to know which was the right sanctuary where she could go to make expiation for her sins.[3]

Perhaps the solution is in vs. 19, where the Samaritan woman recognized Jesus as a prophet, someone who was able to know her personal life. Now face to face with a Jewish prophet, it was natural to listen to what a prophet would say about the

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[1]Perhaps not the expected Tahed; others looked to Jesus as a prophet (John 9:17; Luke 7:16).

[2]Morris (The Gospel According to John, p. 267) states: "It seems more probable that she is simply trying to change the subject. She wants to steer the conversation away from the unpleasant subject of her sin." Frederick Louis Godet (Commentary on the Gospel of John, 2 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1955], 1:426) mentions that Astie said: "She diverts attention from her own life by proposing a point of controversy." The same idea is found in SDABC, 5:939. Albert Barnes, in Notes on the New Testament, Luke and John (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1954), p. 217, states: "The conversation about her manner of life was a very unpleasant topic to her--as it is always unpleasant to sinners to talk about their lives and the necessity of religion--and she was glad to turn the conversation to something else."

[3]R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of John (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1942), p. 318, says: "The matter is of the gravest personal concern to her for this and for this alone. She admits that she needs cleansing. Where is she to obtain it? Where her people say, in the mountain, Gerizim, looming up not far from the well; or where the Jews say, in the Temple at Jerusalem? Will not Jesus send her to the latter place, to bring her sin offering and to obtain the absolution?"

controversy which had spearated Jews and Samaritans for centuries. In other words, what she proposed "was not a diversion but a natural thought on one brought face to face with an interpreter of the divine will."[1]

She explained to the prophet, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain. . ." (John 4:20). By fathers or ancestors, she probably meant either the Israelites of Joshua's day, who, according to the Samaritan reading of Deuteronomy 27:4, worshiped on mount Gerizim, or the people of Nehemiah's time, when Saballat (Neh 4:1) built the rival temple on mount Gerizim about 400 B.C.[2] This temple was destroyed by John Hyrcanus about 129 B.C.[3]

According to the Samaritan tradition, it was on mount Gerizim that Abraham prepared the sacrifice of Isaac. It was also there that the patriarch met Melchizedek.[4]

In contrast the Samaritan woman said: "You Jewish people say that Jerusalem is the place where men go to worship" (John 4:20). She did not mention the temple but Jerusalem as the place for worship. It is remarkable, also, that she did not ask a definitive question; she certainly implied which point of view was correct. The woman left the issue as stated in the prophet's hands.

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[1]Brooke F. Westcott, Gospel According to St. John (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1954), 1:156.

[2]"Samaritans," Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary (1960), p. 949.

[3]Ibid.

[4]G. G. C. MacGregor, The Gospel of John, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, 17 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), 4:103.

Verse 21 contains a unique phrase, πιστευε μοί "believe me."[1] It serves as an alternative to the more common expression ἀμην ἀμην λέγω ὑμῖν, "Truly truly I say to you" (John 5:25). It may be believed we need to go back to vs. 19. She professed to believe that Jesus was a prophet. Now the Master asked her to trust in what he was about to say.

Jesus said: "An hour is coming" (John 4:21). This phrase occurs seven times in this Gospel (John 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28; 16:2, 25, 32) and it indicates something in the near future. At the same time Christ added: "and now is" (John 4:23).[2] Jesus does not mean to deny that something in the future is indicated, but by a rhetorical figure indicates that the future is present. In the person of Jesus future and present are mingled.

Now, after all this introduction, the most astounding statement was proclaimed: "An hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father" (John 4:21).

This prophecy of the future and of the present was surely a surprise to the Samaritan woman. Laocalism in worship was declared to be abolished. The worship that Jesus was referring to would not be limited to any specific or geographical center such as "this mountain" or "Jerusalem."

As a prophet, Christ indicated freedom from local sanctuaries and at the same time a universal scope of worship. The place of worship is a secondary matter. What is essential is true worship.

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[1]See also John 14:11.

[2]See also John 4:23; 5:23; 16:32.

As Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman what true worship was, he introduced three sacred factors: the Father, spirit, and truth.

"The Father" (John 4:21) title which occurs here for the first time is characteristic of John and is used here in contrast with the Samaritan's expressions about "our father Jacob" (John 4:12) or "our fathers" (John 4:20). Here Jesus introduces the idea of the universal Fatherhood of God. This idea also emancipates worship from every limitation of time and space and makes it possible for anyone to be a real worshiper, not by virtue of the space, Jerusalem or Gerizim, but by virtue of the One who is worshiped and of the way he is worshiped. This revelation of the Father was an essential part of Jesus' ministry (John 14:2, 3, 16-26; 17:25, 26).

The worship of the Father is further clarified by the addition of the phrase ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ "in spirit and truth." John makes frequent use of such combinations of words which aim to express more emphatically what the writer wishes to combine. The following are some examples: "grace and truth" (John 1:14, 17), "truth and life" (John 14:6), "in deed and truth" (1 John 3:18), "in truth and love" (2 John 3).

Here the word "spirit" indicates the mind or the intellectual part of man. It refers to that part of man that is capable of holding ideas about God, and through which God can communicate with man (Rom 1:9; 8:16; 1 Cor 7:34; 1 Thess 5:23).

Truth is what God has revealed in the Word (John 17:17). That is to say that our worship must be in harmony with the principles and admonitions of the Scriptures. It should be

Christ-centered because Christ is truth (John 14:6).[1]

These two characteristics of true worship are necessary because "god is spirit" (John 4:24). This expression, "god is spirit," is parallel to "God is light" (1 John 1:5) and "God is love" (1 John 4:8). In these texts it is the nature not the personality of God which is described. Because He is a "spirit" he "does not dwell in houses made by human hands" (Acts 7:48). Therefore, He is absolutely free from all limitations of space and time.

The dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman draws to a close as the woman expresses some hope in the coming Messiah "who is called Christ" (John 4:25), and is followed by the majestic self-revelation of Jesus, "I who speak to you am He" (John 4:26).

Summary

From the book of Acts, it is clear that Christ's disciples and the first Christians participated freely in the temple worship and at the time of prayer.

Not competing with the temple service was the role of the synagogue not only in Jerusalem but also in the Diaspora. Very little is known about the participation of the Christians in the synagogue worship. But it is important to notice that the role of the synagogue was not limited to worship; it was also a center of education and communal life.

The Christian Church took its first steps as a family. Its first place of meeting was the home. The book of Acts and the

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[1]See also John 1:17; 8:32, 47; 16:13; 18:37; 1 John 3:19; 4:6; 5:19).

epistles testify to this truth. It is obvious that at home the sacred and the secular was harmoniously blended with one purpose, the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

Finally, it is clear from the sayings of Jesus that the place of worship is a secondary matter. The essential is true worship, and true worship involves people, not places.

CHAPTER II

PLACES OF WORSHIP FROM THE SECOND TO THE FOURTH CENTURIES

Little information is available on Christian places of worship during the second and third centuries. It must be remembered that during this period the Christian community was subject to frequent persecution. Therefore, the home, or some secret place were used for prayer meetings, for an evening of Christian fellowship or instruction. What is known about these places of worship during this period is summarized in this chapter.

Places of Worship in the Second Century

When we move from the first to the second century we find that the situation remains unchanged. If you had asked some godly Christian in any important city of the Mediterranean world where Christianity had penetrated during the first century: Where is the church? with all certainty you would have been taken to a group of worshiping people gathered in a room in a house. There was no church building. Baptism was administered in any suitable river and the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the most convenient room in the home of a believer.

At the trial of Justin Martyr (c. A.D. 163-167), Rusticus, prefect of Rome, asked him to reveal where the homes were in which

the Christians worshiped. Justin answered, "Where each will and can. Do you really think that we all meet in the same place?"[1] The prefect became a little more specific: "Tell me, where do you meet, in what place do you gather your disciples?"[2] Justin's explanation deserves our attention: "I lodge above the house of Martinus, at the Rimiotinian Bath, and during all this time I have known no other place of meeting."[3]

Celsus, a pagan critic of Christianity (c. A.D. 177-180), asked: "Why have they no temples, no altars, no acknowledged images?"[4] Origen replied: "In the highest sense, God's temple and image are in the humanity of Christ."[5] In other words, Origen answered that all of this was unnecessary for a real religion, and that Christians could worship their God anywhere.

As the second century ended, it is possible to see the first traces of special places for worship, called by Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 200), "church" a word that means a congregation and some special building. He wrote:

> Woman and man are to go to church decently attired, with natural step, embracing silence, possessing unfeigned love, pure in body, pure in heart, fit to pray to God.
> After having paid reverence to the discourse about God, they leave within the church what they have heard.[6]

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[1]Walter W. Oetting, The Church of the Catacombs (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 25.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Augustus Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church (London: Wiley and Putnan, 1872), 1:289.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Clement of Alexandria The Instructor 3.11 (ANF, 2:290).

It is important to notice this early use of the word ekklesia for a place or house of worship.

In the East, some evidence of Christian architecture has been found from as early as the second century. J. G. Davies reports that the Chronicle of Arbela[1] records that the "third bishop Isaac" (A.D. 123-136) was responsible for the building of a church" in the East, beyond the Tigris."[2] Davies also says that the Chronicle of Edessa[3] provide the information that there was in the city a "templum ecclesiae Christianorum which was destroyed by a flood in A.D. 202."[4]

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[1]With respect to the Chronicle of Arbela, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1971 ed., 21:588, states: "The earliest chronicle is that by Meshihazekha, composed between 540-551 and known as the Chronicle of Arbela. Its information about the oldest period of Christianity in Adiabene is drawn from a still older but lost work, composed by Abel about the middle of the fifth century. On the other hand the New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed., 1:740 says: "The Chronicle of Arbela is a Syrian Acts of the Martyrs discovered and published by A. Mengana in 1907. It was written by Mesiha-Zeka, probably at Adiabene in the mid-sixth and covers the history of Christianity in Persia between 100-550. Recent scholarly investigation indicates that much of its information is legendary."

[2]J. G. Davies, Origen and Development of Early Christian Church Architecture (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953, p. 14.

[3]With respect to the Chronicle of Edessa, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1971 ed., 21:588 says: "The Chronicle of Edessa written later in the sixth century, is a valuable source, although limited in extent." On the other hand the New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed., 5:103, states: "Chronicle of Edessa, or Chronicum Edessenum, an anonymous chronicle of the late sixth century. It begins with an official record of the flooding of the city in A.D. 201. In this flood, says the record, the ecclesia christianorum or Christian church was hit by the waters, thus supplying valuable witness to early Christianity in Osrhoene. This document is the first dated Syriac writing. The chronicler uses generally trustworthy sources for his brief, almost annalistic recital of the main events, the succession of bishops, and other matters pertaining to the history of Edessa. It is thus a fine historical source and is preserved in only one manuscript."

[4]Davies, Origen and Development, p. 14.

Generally speaking, until the latter part of the second century the position of the Christian church was not secure enough, therefore meetings were still held in private homes or secret places. Therefore the words of Augustus Neander are precise:

> Fellowship in prayer and devotion was considered a means of promoting holiness, since it was known that the Lord was present with his Spirit, in the midst of those who were assembled together in his name; but nothing could be more distant from the thoughts of Christians generally than to attribute any special sacredness to the place of meeting. Such a fancy seemed to savor of paganism; and it was the less possible for Christians to be led into such a mistake at the beginning, because their earliest places of assembly were ordinary rooms in private houses, such as any member of the church, who had a dwelling suited to the purpose, could furnish.[1]

Third-Century Buildings

As we study the third century, we find the house church still the model for Christian meeting places. The best evidence comes from two apocryphal books. The Acts of Thomas (first half of the third century) indicates that the Christians met in homes "for instruction, baptism, and Lord's Supper" (Acts of Thomas 131-133).[2] The Acts of Peter, also a work of the third century quotes a certain Marcellus as saying to Peter:

> I have cleansed my house for you . . . I sprinkled all my house, all the dining room . . . And now, most blessed man, I have told the widows and the aged to meet you in my house. . . . And Peter went into the dining room and saw the Gospel was being read. (Acts of Peter 19, 20)

Nevertheless, a natural development seems to have occurred during the third century.[3] Previously the house was used by the

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[1]Neander, p. 289.

[2]See Edgar Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).

[3]I deliberately did not mention the catacombs as places of

family owner in his daily life. The triclinium or dining room was used by the family as customary, and it was also used as the meeting place of the Christians because it was the largest room in the house. It was at the same time the most logical place for the Lord's Supper.

When the church increased in numbers some houses were used in their entirety for Christian worship only. These houses were furnished and decorated as places of worship. The best example of this kind of house church which can be immediately recognized as such is in Dura Europos, in the Euphates valley.

Dura Europos was a small fortified town. It was full of temples dedicated to the gods of Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia, Iran, and Syria. There was also a beautiful Jewish synagogue, and on one street corner, there was a house that by the simple process of "knocking down a wall and merging it with the adjoining . . . room, provided space for some fifty people."[1] Probably most of the alterations happened around the year A.D. 231.

Some of the other rooms of the house were dedicated to the instruction of the believers. In one room a small baptistry was

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worship. It appears that the catacombs were used as a place of worship in times of emergencies such as persecution, war, etc. But generally speaking these places were subterranean cemeteries. Albert Henry Newman, A Manual of Church History (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1933), p. 295 states: "The idea that they [catacombs] were largely used for purposes of worship has been abandoned, owing to lack of evidence of the existence of chambers large enough to accommodate any considerable gathering." Alan Gowans writes: "There seems no truth, however, in the widespread belief that early Christians used the catacombs as secret meeting places for worship." Alan Gowans, "Catacombs," Encyclopaedia Britannica ed. (1971), 5:55-58.

[1]Davies, The Secular Use of Church, p. 6.

built that "was richly decorated with painted scenes from the Old and New Testaments, symbolizing the Fall and Redemption of mankind."[1] It is possible that the elder of the church lived in the upper rooms of the house.

J. G. Davies' comments are well taken:

> The alterations did not affect the character of the building as an example of local domestic architecture, nor of the eucharist as a domestic event within the family of Christians.[2]

Probably this extraordinary example in Dura Europos was multiplied among the Christian believers, and many homes, or at least rooms, were dedicated as the place where "the Christians customarily meet."[3] This idea is endorsed by Tertullian (c. A.D. 160-220) who speaks of "going to church" and of "going to the house of God."[4]

It is possible to conclude that before the fourth century, in several places of the Roman Empire and perhaps beyond its borders, Christians no longer continued to meet only in private homes. In many places they met in large buildings especially adapted for worship, prayer, and fellowship.

From all the information available, it appears that at least during the first three centuries there were no church buildings as such. Apologist Minucius Felix, in the last third of the second century, stated: "We have not temples and no altars."[5]

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[1]Michael Gough, The Early Christians (New York: Frederich A. Praeger Publisher, 1961), p. 60.

[2]Davies, The Secular Use of the Church, p. 6. [3]Ibid., p. 7.

[4]Tertullian On Idolatry, c. 7 (ANG 3:689).

[5]Davies, Secular Use of the Church, p. 1.

Because of this Christians were accused of "Atheism" by the pagan population so accustomed to bloody sacrifices in their temples.

Naturally we cannot evade these questions: Why did not the early Christians build churches? What understanding did they share about the relationship between the sacred and the secular in their meeting houses? It is possible to indicate at least four factors that prevented the Christians from erecting buildings for worship: (1) poverty, (2) the small number of members, (3) persecution, and (4) theological reasons.

Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 145-230) wrote: "It is not the place but the assembly of the elect that I call Church."[1] Hippolytus (third century) stated: "It is not a place that is called Church, nor a house made of stones and earth. . . . What then is the Church? It is the holy assembly of those who live in righteousness."[2] Finally Tertullian remarks:

> We may pray in every place which the occasion or which necessity may furnish; for the apostles who prayed to God and sang his praises in the prison, within the hearing of the keepers, surely did nothing contrary to the commands of our Lord, any more than did Paul, when in the ship and before the eyes of all, he consecrated the Lord's supper.[3]

Places of Worship in the Fourth Century

The arrival of the fourth century marks the most significant change of status in the history of the church. From a religio illicita, often persecuted by the Empire, the Christian Church

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[1]Clement of Alexandria The Stromata vii.5 (ANF, 2:530).

[2]Edward A. Sovik, Architecture for Worship (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1973), p. 13.

[3]Neander, p. 289. Cf. Tertullian On Prayer c.24.

became a religio licita, and finally the only legal religion espoused first by emperor Constantine and established by subsequent emperors. Imperial edicts announced the recognition of Christianity and ordered the restitution of church buildings (certainly home churches).[1] At the same time the church was provided with sumptuous buildings called basilicas for worship.

According to R. Krautheimer, "in Constantine's times, the Christian basilica was viewed as just another monumental public meeting-hall with religious overtones."[2] There was a whole variety of plans and uses for the basilica. It was frequently a hall without aisles. It could also have nave and aisles, galleries or projecting apses. There were forum basilicas, palace basilicas, and bath basilicas. They were used as covered markets, law courts, and audience chambers. In fact, the basilica was a large meeting hall "given a religious association by the presence of the emperor's effigy which was a feature of the cult of his divinity."[3]

According to James White:

> The worship offered in these magnificent buildings reflected the splendor and dignity which the ancient world expected of public occasions.[4]

When Christians began to build their own temples it was natural to turn to the Bible for guidance. However, contrary to

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[1]See Robert M. Grant, Early Christianity and Society (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), pp. 150, 151.

[2]R. Krautheimer, Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 21.

[3]Davies, Secular Use of Church, p. 10.

[4]James F. White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 56.

the New Testament teachings, they began to apply what the Old Testament said about the sanctuary and the temple, to the new buildings. As an example, Eusebius, at the inauguration of the new temple in Tyre, called the Bishop Paulinus "a new Bezalel, the master builder of the divine tabernacle . . . a new Zerubbabel who adorned the temple of God. . . ."[1]

But certainly not all Christians were prepared to accept this big change and many voices spoke out against it. Hilary of Poitiers (c. A.D. 315-367), for example, declared that "it is wrong to be attached to walls, it is wrong to direct your veneration for the Church towards roofs and buildings."[2] In the same line John Chrysostom (c. A.D. 347-407) contended that "the church is not constituted by an enclosure of walls; it consists in the number of its members."[3]

Depending on the point of view, this great change of the fourth century has been seen as either the triumph or the fall of the church. Whichever way we look at it, it is clear that the life-style of the Christian church changed from that of a persecuted sect or an underground church to that of a richer and increasingly pompous established religion.

Two negative results of this great change were the loss of intimacy and fellowship that for three centuries characterized

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[1]Eusebius The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine, trans. G. Williamson (New York: University Press, 1966), p. 384.

[2]Davies, Secular Use of Church, p. 15.

[3]Ibid.

the home church, and the sharper division between clergy and laity. The importance of the clergy increased in the performance of the rituals of worship, while the laity more and more became simple spectators of the ceremonies or rites performed by the clergy.

Summarizing, from the second to the fourth centuries, the places of worship for the Christian community were mainly homes. Some houses, it appears were wholly dedicated for Christian worship. The advent of Constantine changed the status of the Christian church, and the basilica became the most popular place of worship.

This project does not deal with the Middle Ages. However, a brief note on places of worship in Roman Catholic countries of Western Europe during that period may be in order.

There is little information about the places of worship during the Middle Ages. The general idea was to erect church buildings that were divided into two rooms: the smaller (sanctuary) was the place for the altar, and naturally the place for the priest; the other room, the larger one (nave) was the place where the people congregated.

For some writers the identification of the church and the temple was complete. The sanctuary corresponded to the most holy place, and the nave to the holy place. This division of the nave and the sanctuary was characteristic of the Middle Ages.[1]

On the other hand it is necessary to emphasize that from the Patristic period, and during the Middle Ages, several secular

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[1]See Walter O. Comm, "A Study of the Spiritual Influence of the Arts on Christian Liturgy with Special Emphasis on the Impact of Architecture on Seventh-day Adventists" (Doctor of Ministry project, Andrews University, 1976), pp. 38-68.

uses were made of church buildings, such as:

1. Centers of healing (incubation)
2. Sanctuary--protection for people in danger
3. Shelters for travellers, to sleep overnight
4. Place to sell selected goods
5. Meeting places for:
   a. Councils
   b. Elections
   c. Legal proceedings
6. Storage places
7. Teaching and library facilities.[1]

According to G. M. Trevelyan, in the Middle Ages, "the nave of the church was the 'village hall' for most communal purposes."[2]

Chapter 3 takes us deeper into the places of worship from the sixteenth century through to the twentieth century.

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[1] "Sometimes, regrettably, churches were the scene of the reverse process, i.e., not of the storing but of the destruction of books. In 1527 before Cardinal Wolsey, seated on a specially constructed scaffold in St. Paul's, copies of Tyndale's translations of the New Testament into English were burned in the nave," J. G. Davies, The Secular Use of Church Buildings, p. 78.

[2] G. M. Trevelyan, English Social History (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1944), as quoted by J. G. Davies, The Secular Use of Church Buildings, p. 78.

CHAPTER III

PLACES OF WORSHIP FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A selective historical survey of places of worship utilized by some Christian denominations from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries are the study of this chapter. We are concerned with two aspects in this chapter: (1) what kind of places of worship were used and (2) what was the concept of sacred and secular as understood by the adherents.

The great Reformation of the sixteenth century was at first a purely religious movement, supremely concerned with man's salvation and with the return to primitive Christian ideals.

Some Ideas of Luther and Calvin

As far as their places of worship are concerned, the reformers followed in general the practice of the Medieval Church. In many instances they just took over existing buildings, and after some kind of purification, used them as churches.

In 1526, after some discussion about places of worship and the ways in which religious services were commonly held, Martin Luther wrote:

> But now the third way to have a truly evangelical (church) order would be not to have it held so openly in a public place for all sorts of people but rather for those who mean earnestly to be Christians and to profess the Gospel in word

> and deeds. They would record their names on a list and meet by themselves in some house in order to pray, read (the Bible), baptize, receive communion, and undertake other Christian exercise. In this way one could recognize those who did not behave themselves as Christians, reprove them, reclaim, cast out, or ban them, according to the rule of Christ in Matthew 18 (15-17). Here one could require among Christians a common chest which would be given to voluntarily and made available to the poor, according to the example of St. Paul, II Corinthians 9 (:1). The many and elaborate chants would be unnecessary . . . and everything centered on the word and prayer and love.[1]

This was an ideal. It pictured the young Luther full of enthusiasm and zeal for God. But Luther had to settle for what became traditional Lutheran practice. Nevertheless his vision did not totally die.

Later John Calvin wrote:

> Now as God by his word ordains common prayer for believers, so also ought there to be public temples wherein these may be performed, in which those who spurn fellowship with God's people in prayer have no occasion to give a false excuse, that they enter their bedroom to obey the Lord's command. For he, who promises that he will do whatever two or three gathered together in his name may ask [Matt 18:19-20], testifies that he does not despise prayers publicly made, provided ostentation and chasing after paltry human glory are banished, and there is present a sincere and true affection that dwells in the secret of the heart.
>
> If this is the lawful use of church buildings, as it certainly is, we in turn must guard against either taking them to be God's proper dwelling places, whence he may more nearly incline his ear to us--as they began to be regarded some centuries ago--or feigning for them some secret holiness or other, which would render prayer more sacred before God. For since we ourselves are God's true temples, if we would call upon God in his holy temple, we must pray within ourselves. Now let us leave this stupidity to Jews or pagans, for we have the commandment to call upon the Lord, without distinction of place, "in spirit and in truth" [John 4:23]. At God's command the Temple had indeed been dedicated of old for offering prayers and sacrificial victims, but at that time the truth lay hidden, figuratively represented under such shadows; now, having been expressed to us in living reality, it does not allow us to cleave to any material temple. And

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[1]George H. Williams, "Congregationalist, Luther and the Free Churches," The Lutheran Quarterly 19 (1967):286.

> not even to the Jews was the Temple committed on the condition that they might shut up God's presence within its walls but in order that they might be trained to contemplate the likeness of true temple. Therefore Isaiah and Stephen gravely rebuked those who thought God in any way dwells in temples made with hands [Isa. 66:1; Acts 7:48, 49].[1]

It is clear that for Calvin churches were necessary, but he did not consider them as holy, and he certainly did not call them the house of God. The church building was primarily a preaching house and to "this day reformed churches outside Switzerland, have remained exclusively centers of worship."[2] On the other hand the Reformed Churches in the Swiss Cantons "are still in regular use for secular activities."[3]

The Anabaptists

The origin of the Anabaptists in Switzerland is not clear. By 1529 groups of Anabaptists were found in several European countries. Some articles of faith, dating as far back as 1527, stated that the Anabaptist community "should meet at least three or four times each week to study the teaching of Christ and His apostles."[4] It is clear that these meetings were held in houses where the visitors were entertained with food provided by the host.[5]

By the second half of the seventeenth century the situation

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[1]John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 2:893, 894.

[2]Davies, The Secular Use of Church, p. 123.

[3]Ibid., p. 241.

[4]Delbert L. Gratz, Bernese Anabaptists and Their American Descendants (Goshen, IN: Mennonite Historical Society, 1953), p. 25.

[5]Ibid., p. 26.

for the Anabaptists in Bern became very difficult. By 1671, about 700 persons left Bern looking for safety in new places. Some letters report that the believers began to hold their religious meetings in the forest or in some barn.[1]

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, many Anabaptist families found places of refuge at Basel, where they had opportunity to gather for worship services in a large room of a farm house.[2] On May 13, 1726, in a letter addressed to Prince Johann Conrad, "the communes of La Terriere and Sonvillier"[3] complained against the Anabaptists. Among the many complaints it was emphasized that the Anabaptists "do not even worship on Sunday. They hold meetings at night, secretly at different places, nobody knows where or when."[4]

This complaint clearly indicated that the Anabaptists did not have buildings for worship and had to find meeting places in the woods, a cave, a house, a barn, or a secluded ravine. In these places worship consisted of prayers, songs, and exhortations.

The Swiss writer, Heinrich Zschokke, who visited the Jura Mountains in the first part of the nineteenth century wrote:

> It was as if I were living in the first times of Christianity, they [Anabaptists] were so content, so pious and without hyprocrisy. . . . On Sunday they come to this or that teacher (Lehrer) to be instructed in the open or in the barn or in a large room in a home. The teacher speaks . . . he baptizes, gives communion, marries, but is a farmer like the others. . . . When the services are finished those families living at a distance are served meals as these had been at their homes at some former time.[5]

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[1] Ibid., p. 38. [2] Ibid., p. 68. [3] Ibid., p. 71.

[4] Ibid. [5] Ibid., p. 113.

The New England Meeting House

The first permanent group of colonists that came from England to America in 1607 arrived at a place later known as Jamestown in Virginia. The minister of the group was Robert Hunt, an Anglican clergyman who for several years had been rector of a church in England. In an old document from this colony the following detailed description of the first church at Jamestown is found. Captain John Smith wrote:

> I have been often demanded by so many how we began to preach the Gospel in Virginia, and by what authority, what Churches we had, our order of service, and maintenance for our Ministers, therefore, I think it not amisse to satisfie their demands, it being the Mother of all our Plantations, intreating Pride to spare laughter, to understand her simple beginning and proceedings. When I first went to Virginia, I well remember, wee did hang an awning (which is an old saile) to three or four tress to shadow us from Sunne, our walls were rales of wood, our seats unhewed tress, till we cut plankes; our Pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighboring tress; in foule weather we shifted into an old rotten tent, for wee ha few better, and this came by the way of adventure for new. This was our church, till wee built a homely thing like a barne, set upon cratches, covered with rafts, sedge, and earth; so was also the walls; the best of our houses of the like curiosity, but the most parte farre much worse workmanship, that could neither well defend wind or raine, yet wee had daily Common Prayer morning and evening, every Sunday two sermons, and every three moneths the holy Communion, till our Minister died. But our prayers daily, with an Homily on Sundaies, we continued two or three yeares after, till more Preachers came.[1]

This brief but challenging account reveals the great spirit that moved our forefathers. It also emphasizes how essential it was for them to have a little place which they could call meeting-house, church, or preaching house. Not only was this a place for worship, it was a center for discussion, and social hub.

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[1]William Stevens Perry, The History of the American Episcopal Church (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1885), 1:45, 46.

In those early days in many parts of the populated country, the town meetinghouse, which was used for public meetings of the city government, was also used as the church. In other words, the meetinghouse was a structure which served not "only for regular meetings on Sabbath and town meetings, but also as a gathering place of the inhabitants at all times"[1] such as a happy event or in time of emergency. This simple building dominated the entire life activity in the town or city. Here the people met for every purpose of life, therefore the name was very appropriate--the meetinghouse. Edmund Sinnott describes the meetinghouse as "an edifice neither sacred nor purely secular, but appropriate for any honorable service."[2]

New England Meetinghouse

Before the middle of the seventeenth century, the New England meetinghouse showed no clear resemblance with the ecclesiastical buildings of Europe. The building was nearly square, with three entrances. The building was high in order to accommodate a gallery. Two rows of windows illuminated the gallery and the main floor. In the earliest day simple benches filled the main floor. Later the benches were given backs, and still later "box" pews were allowed.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a new type of meetinghouse arose. The new structure was rectangular with a simple roof. The bell tower was built at one end of the building. The

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[1]Edmund Sinnott, Meeting House and Church in Early New England (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 5.

[2]Ibid.

main entrance was on one side and faced the road. The pulpit was built opposite to the main door.

The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century was a time of prosperity for New England. These economic changes were reflected in a new type of meetinghouse that adopted some characteristics of religious buildings in Europe. The main entrance stood at one end and over the entrance rose a more elaborate structure--the steeple. The pulpit was moved to the other end of the building. The meetinghouse had become a church.

Soon after the turn of the century, a feeling began to grow among the Puritans, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists that the meetinghouse "should be less of a secular building and more a House of the Lord."[1]

These feelings were met in two ways. The richer congregations began to erect parish houses or vestries.[2] Usually these were connected with the church building in order to meet the new needs of the congregation. More commonly, the meetinghouse auditorium was two stories high. The upper part that was usually the gallery, became the church; the lower part gave space for the social hall often used as a recreation room, a kitchen, and later on, as a Sunday School room.[3] Several of these meetinghouses were divided into two floors, the first one was used as a town hall, as was from the beginning, and the second floor was used for worship services.

To better understand the function of the meetinghouse during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and in some cases during

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[1]Ibid., p. 72. [2]Ibid., p. 142. [3]Ibid.

the twentieth century, a brief separate study is made of a few Christian groups.

The Puritans

Puritanism developed in England from the second half of the sixteenth century until the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1653. Puritanism began as a reform movement within the official Anglican Church. Their demands were rejected by Queen Elizabeth, and on March 26, 1566, thirty-seven clergymen were suspended of their religious functions. They created no disorder, but quietly came together in private houses or public halls in order to sing their hymns and listen to their pastors.[1]

The Puritan meetings were called "conventicles" giving the idea of something secret or illegal. In some places in England, as Essex, "conventicles are known to have been taking place as early as the 1570's."[2] Around the year 1605, Waring Croxton and his wife with eleven others were charged for "keeping a private fast upon Xmas day. . . ."[3] Others such as Thomas Milnes and John Butterworth were charged with "having assembled and met in diverse houses for religious purposes."[4]

Puritans in North America

New England was the oasis for the Puritans. It was here that their ideals began to be a reality"--a church without a bishop and a state without a king."

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[1] Douglas Campbell, The Puritan in Holland, England, and America (New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1899), 1:446.

[2] R. C. Richardson, Puritanism in North-West England (Manchester: University Press, 1972), p. 86.

[3] Ibid.,

[4] Ibid., p. 87.

During the first few months, the Puritan ministers often preached to their congregations with the sky as their roof, or under the shade of majestic trees, or in some elevation. After some years, the first few meetinghouses were built. These simple structures served not only for worship during the Sabbath or for regular town assemblies but also as gathering places in times of danger or emergency.[1]

Technically, the meetinghouse was a structure used for both secular and religious purposes. This building was the center of the entire community. This was a place for fellowship, a place for worship and prayer.[2] In many communities of the early days in New England, the meetinghouse was the only fortified place used as a refuge against Indian attacks. It was often the only place in which to store ammunition and war supplies.[3]

In Vermont wolves were perhaps the greatest danger for the first settlers, so rewards were offered for their destruction. One reward sign read: "Fifteen shillings to any man bringing a live wolf to the meeting house."[4] In reality only ten shillings were paid to the person who killed a wolf, but the reward was paid when the wolf's head was nailed to the meetinghouse.

The meetinghouse also served a religious purpose. Under its rustic ceiling, every Sunday the entire community gathered for worship. These weekly assemblies with their opportunities for fellowship, study of the scriptures, and prayers were perhaps the

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[1]Sinnott, p. 6. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

[4]Elise Lathrop, Old New England Churches (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing Company, 1938), p. 159.

most important events in the life of each Puritan community.

However, the meetinghouse was not a church. There was no specific part of the building set apart from secular uses. Yet, in the mind of many sincere Puritans, this building was their sanctuary, the place in which they met thier Lord and Saviour.

Edmund W. Sinnott wrote:

> There was nothing to suggest a religious atmosphere here; nothing but the simplest and most practical means of providing a shelter for gathering that might be either secular or religious.[1]

The Quakers

The term "Quakers" is the name by which members of the Religious Society of Friends are frequently known.

Quakers in England

Quakerism was born during the seventeenth century as a reaction against the apostasy that swept over the existing churches in England. Quakers believed that they were called to restore the apostolic faith and to make a new beginning in England and in the world. They called themselves a fellowship, a society, whose head was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. They saw their small group as a part of the world church scattered in all the lands. Therefore it was necessary to discover those who were the true fellow members of the great household of God.

George Fox (1624-1691) is considered the founder of Quakerism. As a result of his studies in 1646, Fox came to the following conclusions:

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[1]Sinnott, p. 29.

> That God, who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands. This at first seemed a strange word, because both priests and people used to call their temples or churches, dredful places, holy ground, and the temples of God. But the Lord showed me clearly, that he did not dwell in these temples which men have commanded and set up, but in people's hearts; for both Stephen and the apostle Paul bare testimony that he did not dwell in temples made with hands. . . .[1]

In 1647 he wrote:

> All Christians are believers and are born of God; that a university education does not make one a true minister of Christ; that God does not dwell exclusively in temples made with hands; that every man is enlightened by the divine light of Christ. . . .[2]

Still later, in 1651, in his Journal he added: "The steeple-house and pulpit were offensive to my mind, because priests and people called them the house of God, and idolized them."[3]

Fox began to preach especially to the Baptists and Independents who were scattered throughout England. After three years a small company was formed. They called themselves "the Children of Light"; later they changed their name to "Friends" or better said, "Friends in the Truth."

From 1651 to 1654, Fox travelled in the Northern part of England, holding meetings wherever he could--in such places as houses, orchards, or under the shadow of the trees. Hundreds of people accepted Fox's good news and soon they also began to preach the same truth. Two of Fox's many associates went to London to preach, and the only large room available for them was the old "Bull and Mouth Tavern" where they held large meetings. Fox's opponents

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[1]Davies, The Secular Use of Church, p. 118.

[2]Elbert Russell, The History of Quakerism (New York: Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 23.

[3]Davies, The Secular Use of Church, p. 118.

sarcastically called this place "the tavern chapel."[1]

When persecution arose, the "Friends" found homes that would open their doors to the preaching of the gospel.[2] In some places they rented houses to celebrate their meetings, and when these rented houses were padlocked by the authorities, the street corners and the market places were the places of meeting for the Quakers.

Beside the meetings for worship, there were the business meetings. "These were not distinct in the sense that one was sacred and the other secular."[3] For them, both worship and business were part of the entire church's program. On the other hand, they strongly believed that public worship could be held in unconsecrated buildings, because the church was the body of believers and not the building.

Quakers in New Amsterdam

It was in 1657 that the first group of Quakers landed in "New Amsterdam, now New York city."[4] The next day Mary Wetherhead and Dorothy Waught preached to the people in the streets of New Amsterdam. Three other members of the first group of Quakers made a tour to Long Island. There in the town of Hempstead, they invited the people "to a meeting in an orchard."[5] On Long Island, Deborah Moody almost at once became a Friend and her home became the first place of meeting for the Quakers.[6]

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[1]William C. Braithwaite, The Beginning of Quakerism (Cambridge: University Press, 1955), p. 182.

[2]Russell, pp. 87-107. [3]Ibid., p. 75.

[4]Rufus M. Jones, The Quakers in the American Colonies (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911), p. 219.

[5]Ibid., p. 221. [6]Ibid., p. 222.

In 1659 a "Friend" named John Taylor from York, England, made a tour to Long Island. Later he wrote:

> It came into my heart to go and visit the people on Long Island and to seek the lost. And it pleased the Lord so to order my way, that I found in several towns and villages a pretty many fine, sober people that feared God and were convinced of the blessed truth. . . . Many meetings of the people were settled sometimes in the woods and wilderness.[1]

In 1702, Samuel Bownas of England visited Long Island. His first great meetings took place "at Hempstead in a great barn and it was attended by a crowd of people."[2]

Quakerism in Virginia

The first two Quaker missionaries in Virginia were Josiah Coale and Thomas Thruston. They used private homes for their meetings. When the owners of these houses were arrested and fined, a group of Quakers began holding meetings aboard the ship "Blessinge" anchored in the Elizabeth River.[3]

When George Fox visited Maryland from January 3 to May 21, 1673, he held meetings "in barns, in tobacco houses, in Friends' houses and in the Wigwams of the Indians."[4]

Around the year 1664 some families of "Friends" began to settle in New Jersey. Looking for better places to settle the Quaker families proceeded up the Delaware River and established themselves in Salem. They held their religious services in private homes.

In Boston, the house of John Chamberlein was the Quakers'

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[1] Ibid., pp. 225, 226.

[2] Ibid., p. 234.

[3] Ibid., pp. 274, 275.

[4] Ibid., p. 288.

meeting place despite the problems with the authorities. Chamberlein "was whipped nine times at the cart's tail because he suffered a meeting at his house."[1]

From the beginning, the place was not of uppermost importance because:

> The most important feature of the meeting was the powerful sense of reality which pervaded it--the peculiar conviction which possessed the members of the group, that they had found God.[2]

These religious meetings "gradually developed into meetings for the transaction of business and matters concerning the wider life of the church."[3] By the year 1703, in the "Allen's house"[4] representatives of eight Quaker settlements met together for two days. The end result was the formation of "group consciousness, and social ideas for the Quaker community."[5]

As the Quakers went from place to place, they held their meetings, sometimes in the woods, later in houses, and finally in their own meetinghouses, which they built in order to accommodate the increasing number of members, and the new "believers."[6]

The meetinghouses were used for worship and for meetings that cared for the poor and for the social life of the community. Here also were held the town-meeting, the school, and the court, "and on the doors were nailed up all public notices, whether a royal proclamation [or] the required bans for marriage."[7]

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[1] Ibid., p. 102.

[2] Ibid., p. 142.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p. 143.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 376.

[7] Ibid., p. 377.

The Mennonites

The origin of the Mennonite Christian community needs to be traced back to the Anabaptists. From Switzerland the teaching of the Anabaptists spread rapidly into Austria, South Germany, and the Netherlands. Some copies of Luther's writings came to Menno Simons, an educated Roman Catholic priest. At the age of forty Menno Simons publicly renounced the Roman Catholic Church and cast his life with the Anabaptists. It was in the Netherlands that the Anabaptists were called Mennonites in memory of their leader.

Largely as a result of persecution and until the time of the great "American emigration in the nineteenth century the Mennonites had no meeting houses."[1] Their religious and social meetings were held in barns or in the open air.

Looking for freedom, the Mennonites went to Southern Russia prior to World War I. There they were free to build their own plain wooden meetinghouses. Where there was no meetinghouse, the school building was used for religious service or, as in the past, private homes were used for Christian gatherings.

Mennonites in Pennsylvania

The early migration of Mennonites to America began around the end of the seventeenth century. In 1683 the first Dutch Mennonite group from the lower Rhineland arrived in Germantown, Pennsylvania. The volume of migration "reached its peak between

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[1] C. Henry Smith, Smith's Story of the Mennonites (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1981), p. 98.

the year 1749 and 1754 when more than 30,000 Germans came to the port of Philadelphia."[1]

As it happened in Europe, where many of their meetings for prayer, worship, and community togetherness were held in homes, they followed a similar pattern in America.

In the year 1698 the Mennonite community met for worship "in the house of Isaac Jacobs van Bebber."[2] A small congregation in Worcester, Montgomery County (Pennsylvania), between the years 1739 and 1771 built the first school; it also remained a meeting-house until the year 1890.[3]

In Milford Township, a "long meetinghouse was erected" so that it served both as a church and as a school but a "partition in the building" separated the schoolroom from the assembly room. In Bedminster Township, around 1766, the brethren erected a stone meeting house, and "part of the building was used as a dwelling house, probably for the Sexton-tenant of the church-farm."[4] This arrangement was discontinued in 1794.[5]

Mennonites in Missouri

By the year 1880 many Mennonite families began to move West. Several families stopped in Missouri. Here again the first worship services were conducted in the home of members of the community.

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[1]Grant M. Stolzfus, Mennonites of Ohio and Eastern Conference (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1969), p. 39.

[2]John C. Wenger, History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference (Scottdale, PA: Franconia Mennonite Historical Society, 1937), p. 88.

[3]Ibid., pp. 106, 107. [2]Ibid., pp. 186, 187. [3]Ibid.

In Berea, Shannon County, a school was built in 1897, and it was also used for many years as a church.

Mennonites in Kansas

In the period of 1860-70, following their traditional philosophy of being "on the move for conscience sake,"[1] the Mennonites moved to Kansas. In Spring Valley the first meetinghouse was constructed around the year 1875. The same building was used as a school, and "at one time a family lived in the building until they could rent a farm."[2] This meetinghouse was used for seventeen years.

The early Mennonite community at Pleasant Valley, Harper County, began to have Sunday meetings in their homes. "Taking turns, all would gather together at one place, eat their dinner together, and then have a service."[3] Later, in 1888 they began to meet "at the Pleasant Valley School . . . for a decade."[4]

By the year 1909, in Hesston, Harvey County, the Mennonite's first Academy and Bible School opened its doors. This was the beginning of Hesston College. In this prestigious college, for many years the congregation met for church services in the "chapel-auditorium."[5]

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[1]Paul Erb, South Central Frontiers. A History of the South Central Mennonite Conference (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1974), p. 22.

[2]Ibid., p. 267.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 317.

Mennonites in Canada

Almost a century after the first Mennonites arrived in Pennsylvania, some families began to move towards Canada. The first step was to hold the meetings in their own homes, in sheds, barns, or in the open air under majestic trees. The second step was to erect a community building which would serve as an elementary school and worship house. Finally a wooden church building was erected, but that was also used for public assemblies, "including funerals."[1]

Mennonites in Michigan

In 1863 Kent County (near Grand Rapids) was visited by Preacher David Sherk. The meetings were held at Johnson's home. These included not only preaching services but also baptisms, the Lord's Supper, and feet-washing rituals.[2] Daniel Brenneman, who visited Michigan in 1865, reports in The Herald of Truth (December 2, 3, 1865) that seven families held their worship services in the school-house.[3]

In Michigan, as in Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Canada, the Mennonites began by holding their meetings in homes, rented places, or schoolhouses that would serve as a church and a school. As time went by, a meetinghouse was built and dedicated for worship or activities related to religion.

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[1]Frank H. Epp, Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), p. 122.

[2]John Christian Wenger, The Mennonites in Indiana and Michigan (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1961), p. 132.

[3]Ibid., p. 134.

The Hutterites

Another distinct stream of Christian people is the Hutterites, whose ancestors came to North America from South Germany.

By the year 1874, the Hutterites began to settle in South Dakota. There were nineteen Hutterites colonies in 1917, seventeen in South Dakota and two in Montana. In 1974 there were 229 Hutterites colonies in the U.S.A. and 165 in Canada, with a membership of 21,521.[1]

In their colonies "the school building serves also as church."[2] Generally speaking the room for worship services is large and undecorated. Its furniture consists of benches, the teacher's desk, and some chairs for the preacher and his helpers. According to their ideas, the "specific place where worship is held is unimportant."[3] They had no church building because "sacred space is not confined to one room or one building but encompasses that area where God's order is respected."[4]

Some of the essential requirements for a place of worship are: enough space, seats, a clean, orderly, unornamented room. Worship services are held each day at the school building. Strict order and silence characterize the worshippers. On Sunday, special clothes called "Bible clothes"[5] are worn. Men must use their Sunday jackets.

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[1] John A. Hostetler, Hutterite Society (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 295.

[2] Lee Emerson Deets, The Hutterites: A Study in Social Cohesion (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975), p. 11.

[3] Hostetler, p. 168.

[4] Ibid.

[5] John A. Hostetler and Gertrude Enders Huntington, The Hutterites in North America (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 26.

Early Adventists

Only a summary presentation is made on places of worship among early Adventists.

After 1844, a company of Adventist believers in the city of Portland, Maine, began to hold their meetings at the home of "brother Harmon."[1] Not many days later in the city of Topsham (Maine) a group of believers met for worship at the home of brother Howland.[2] By the year 1848 in New York, about thirty-five believers were present for some meetings and worship, and they used brother Arnold's barn as a chapel.[3]

In 1852 Adventist believers of Rochester, New York, held their religious meetings in the home of James White, where also the headquarters of the publishing work were located.[4] When the White family moved to another place in the same city, their house continued to be the only place for worship. When the believers were forbidden to meet in the White's home for health reasons, a faithful brother "placed folding doors between his parlor and dining room,"[5] and this served as a place of worship for the Rochester congregation until the end of 1856.[6]

In 1858, at Lovett's Grove (Ohio) the believers held their meetings at the school-house.[7] The same experience is repeated at Westbrook, Maine, in 1867.[8]

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[1]Ellen G. White, Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), p. 70.

[2]Ibid., p. 74. [3]Ibid., p. 110. [4]Ibid., p. 142.

[5]J. N. Loughborough, "The First Seventh-day Adventist Meeting-House," The Missionary Magazine 12 (1901):207.

[6]Ibid. [7]White, Life Sketches, p. 161. [8]Ibid., p. 179.

It is possible to say that the Adventist congregations followed the same pattern of the Protestant churches in America, starting with their meetings in homes, barns, schoolhouses, and finally erecting a small meetinghouse.

Among the Adventists there was some fear that by building some kind of meetinghouse for worship, the church would become like other formal churches. Therefore it was considered best to continue holding the meetings in private homes.[1] Eventually, circumstances led them to begin the erection of meetinghouses.

The first meetinghouse ever built by Seventh-day Adventists was erected in the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, in the fall of 1855. It was a small room, "twenty-four by eighteen feet . . . and ten feet in height."[2] The idea was followed by other congregations that began to erect their own meetinghouses for worship.[3]

As the SDA congregation grew in Battle Creek, the necessity of a new meetinghouse arose. By the year 1857 a "wooden house of worship, twenty-eight by forty-two feet was erected."[4] In the year 1866, a third meeting house was erected by the Adventist community in Battle Creek. This one was forty by sixty feet, and included a large gallery.[5]

By this time the church had become aware of the need of providing Christian education for its children. G. H. Bell established an elementary school in 1867. As the number of children increased, the school was moved from the little room of the

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[1]Loughborough, p. 207. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 266. [5]Ibid., p. 319.

schoolhouse to the church building, and the primary division was held in the gallery of the church. In this church building, public meetings were also held for the planning of the establishment of the first Seventh-day Adventist college in America. And on May of 1868, after the General Conference had met, Dr. Trall from New Jersey "gave in this church building a week's course of lectures . . . on the subject of physiology and hygiene."[1]

Summary

From the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century in America and abroad, Christians worshiped in simple places such as in someone's house, in a barn or in a schoolhouse, because they lacked the necessary funds for a regular meetinghouse. But the most fundamental reason for this choice, was a theological one, based on the New Testament idea that God is everywhere.

Since the Reformation, many Christians made no difference between the sacred and the secular, they inter-mingled both concepts as a means to an end.

The selection and construction of places of worship among Seventh-day Adventists has been clearly influenced by the writings of Ellen G. White. Chapter 4 is devoted entirely to an examination of what she wrote on the subject.

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[1]Ibid., p. 320.

CHAPTER IV

ELLEN G. WHITE'S VIEW OF ADVENTIST CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

Until the end of the eighteenth century the meeting house was the center of activity for the community, serving for secular as well as for religious purposes. However, soon after the turn of the nineteenth century, the idea that the meeting house should be used only for religious purposes was being fostered first by the Episcopalians, later by the Baptists, and then others.

The idea came at the time when in many towns there was more than one congregation. Consequently many houses of worship had been built and several of them had no secular obligations to the town.

Meeting-house architecture was also altered "by placing the entrance at the tower end and the pulpit at the other, the typical arrangement for a church."[1] Practically every meeting house built after 1800 "was of this design, and most of the older ones were remodeled to conform to it."[2]

Perhaps these changes in the meetinghouse fore-shadowed the separation of church and state.[3]

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[1]Sinnott, p. 72.

[2]Ibid.

[3]The legal separation between church and state occurred in Massachusetts in 1811, in Connecticut in 1818, in New Hampshire in 1819, and in Maine in 1820.

When looking at the concept of places of worship in the writings of Ellen G. White, it is important to keep in mind the historical setting in which she was writing. Her writings about church buildings comprised basically the last decades of the 1800s and the first one of the 1900s.

Need of Places of Worship

First of all, White conveys the idea that "the church is the sanctuary of the congregation,"[1] therefore meeting houses must be erected in many places where congregations are raised as a result of the preaching of the gospel. She wrote in 1898:

> We must build humble houses for worship wherever our camp-meetings are held . . . some workers are to remain . . . and this work should not be left before a meeting-house is erected for the use of those who shall accept the truth.[2]

In a personal letter to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, on April 1895, she made the appeal: "Meeting houses must be erected in the places where churches are raised. . . ."[3] In another letter, White reported on the first tent effort in Brisbane (Australia). She wrote:

> They cannot hold tent-meetings any longer. . . . They are trying to find a home which they can rent, and by removing partitions, make it a place in which to assemble. But they have failed in this. A humble house of worship must be built there. This work must be done in every city where the camp-meetings are held.[4]

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[1]Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 5:491.

[2]Ellen G. White, MS 173, 1898, Ellen G. White Research Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

[3]Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, 15 April 1895, Letter 46, 1895. (Manuscripts and letters of E. G. White cited in this Project are all located in the Ellen G. White Research Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.)

[4]Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, 20 December 1898, Letter 140, 1898.

She further states, very emphatically:

> If we cannot secure a house of worship, where these who accept unpopular truths can assemble, we might better not enter new places.[1]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, she wrote: "In every place where believers are raised up, humble churches should be built."[2] Then she added a challenging note: "If possible, these should be dedicated to God free from debt."[3]

Emphasizing the idea of many meeting houses, not only in America but also abroad, Ellen White wrote:

> The place should be thoroughly worked, until a humble house of worship stands as a sign, a memorial of God's Sabbath, a light amid the moral darkness. These memorials are to stand in many places as witnesses to the truth.[4]

Repeatedly she affirmed that church buildings are "memorials to God,"[5] and "memorials to His Sabbath."[6] Finally, in an open letter to "My Dear Brethren and Sisters in America," she stated that "by the erection of sanitariums and houses of worship, we extend the triumphs of the cross."[7]

It is clear in these statements that E. G. White did not have any doubt of the necessity of building many places of worship,

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ellen G. White to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, 27 February, 1900, Letter 33, 1900.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), pp. 375, 376.

[5] White, Testimonies, 7:105. [6] Ibid., p. 145.

[7] Ellen G. White to my Dear Brethren and Sisters in America, January 23, 1903. Letter 18, 1903.

"where every Sabbath, the people may assemble to worship God and to hear the Gospel."[1]

Building Style

Nevertheless, the limited function of the meeting house as mentioned above did not hinder the imagination of Seventh-day Adventist architecture, because Ellen White promoted the idea of building in various styles that fit the location. To this endeavor she recommended:

> Churches are built in many places, but they need not all be built in precisely the same style. Different styles of building may be appropriate to different locations.[2]

The Seventh-day Adventist meeting house needs to fit the community. In addition, it should be planned according to the ability of the people to grasp the purpose of that building at their socio-economic level. This counsel is contrary to the proposal sometimes heard that Adventist should design a unique model of a meeting house which could be used all over the country, and perhaps in foreign lands, in order to save time and money.

Simple Meeting Houses

In order to avoid stylish expensive buildings, White emphasized from the beginning the idea of humble places of worship. As early as 1886, she recommended:

> We have no command from God to erect a building which will compare for richness and splendor with the temple.

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[1]Ellen G. White to the Church in Barbados, 21 February 1901, Letter 29, 1901.

[2]White, Evangelism, p. 379.

> But we are to build a humble house of worship, plain and simple, neat and perfect in its design.[1]

Later she wrote: "We must build humble houses for worship."[2] To this concept of humble houses of worship, she added another dimension, saying: "The Lord's goods are to be used with the greatest discretion."[3] She mentioned to the members of the Battle Creek church some of the experiences in Australia. She reported that in "all Australia we have but one meeting house where we can worship God." She added that "a plain, neat, commodious building, of proper dimensions, would fill their hearts with gratitude."[4]

In writing to Elder Irwin, from Australia, she added: "Our meeting house in Cooranbong is built on wooden piles to save expenses;"[5] and to "My Brethren in America" (1899) she again wrote:

> No means are to be invested for unnecessary display, with the plea that it will give character to the work. . . . The Lord is the owner of all they possess, and His stewards will one day have to render a strict account as to how they have administered the entrusted capital.[6]

In a manuscript entitled "A Perfect Ministry: Its Purpose" (1900), she recommended to fellow workers:

> Let none suppose that expensive buildings . . . [are]

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[1]Ellen G. White, MS 23, 1886.

[2]White, M S 173, 1898.

[3]Ellen G. White to Those at the Head of the Work, 14 August 1899, Letter B 120, 1899.

[4]General Conference Bulletin, vol. 5, January 28, 1893, p. 12.

[5]Ellen G. White to Elder Irwin, 12 August 1900, Letter E 112, 1900.

[6]Ellen G. White to My Brethren in America, 19 June 1899, Letter B 93, 1899.

> needed in order to give character to the work. . . . All the beauty and art cannot bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character that is to be revealed in those who have to do with sacred things.[1]

When writing to her son Edson, on June 12, 1902, she made some comments regarding D. T. Shireman and commented how this gentleman used his talents to build a church and some school buildings in Hildebrand.

> As he has built his plain, unpretentious buildings, heavenly angels have been his helpers. It is this kind of work that makes a good impression on the minds of unbelievers.[2]

She further stated that

> Outward show and large outlay of means are not necessary in order to gain the blessing of God. Human taste, human devising, human inclination to ornament, are not to be encouraged. An unnecessary expedition of money means that there will be less to invest in the work of God.[3]

In an article entitled "Memorials in Many Places" the following important statement is made:

> Those who have the money in God's treasury are to economize in the use of means, and they are to consider carefully the needs of the work in the home field and in the regions beyond. If they did this they would not erect mammoth institutions contrary to the instruction of God.[4]

It is clear that E. G. White constantly kept fresh in her mind that this was to be a world-wide church. She tried to challenge the minds of the members of the church with this idea. To one local congregation she wrote:

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[1]Ellen White to My Brethren in America, 19 June 1899, Letter B 93, 1899.

[2]Ellen G. White to Edson White, 12 June 1902, Letter W 122, 1902.

[3]Ellen G. White, "Work in Christ's Lines," Review and Herald, June 24, 1902, p. 8.

[4]Ellen G. White, MS 53, 1903.

> We do not feel it would be in accordance with the mind of the Spirit of God to lay plans for an expensive structure, even if we had plenty of means to invest, for the reason that new fields are constantly opening, and we should take every precaution that not a dollar shall be laid out for the sake of display, or for the indulgence or pride. Every dollar of means will be needed to start the work in new mission fields.[1]

In 1904, writing about some buildings in Washington, D.C., she said that the buildings are to show believers and unbelievers "that not one dollar has been invested in needless display."[2] In the same year she wrote to brother Craw. After several pages of counsel, she added: "The buildings we erect should be plain, without useless display. Let us beware of selfish greed."[3]

In writing to the brethren and sisters in the Southern Union Conference (1904), she cautioned against a false concept of economy:

> Is it economy to fail to provide in our cities places of worship where the Redeemer may meet with His people? Let us not give the impression that we find it too great an expense to provide properly for the reception of the heavenly Guest.[4]

Writing to the congregation at Oakland she said:

> At this time the building of costly meeting houses in any place is not in accordance with our faith. There are many places where meeting houses will soon have to be built; therefore, we should not put larger sums of money in any one place.[5]

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[1]Ellen G. White, MS 49.

[2]Ellen G. White to Elders Daniel and Prescott and Dr. Hare, 15 February 1904, Letter D 83, 1904.

[3]Ellen G. White to Dear Brother Craw, 24 February 1904, Letter C 103 , 1904.

[4]Ellen G. White to My Brethren and Sisters in the Southern Union Conference, 16 January 1904, Letter B 25, 1904.

[5]Ellen G. White to the members of Oakland Church, 18 January 1907, Letter 10, 1907.

In a letter to A. G. Daniells and E. R. Palmer, in 1907, she commented about some donations made for the work in the South, and how these means were to be used in the erection of meeting houses and schools. She added: "No extravagant buildings are to be erected, no extravagant charges made, for this will close the field."[1]

She counseled J. D. Rice:

> Exercise care and wisdom in the erection of this building [a meeting house in Richmond]. A humble house of worship will give character to the work. Buildings give character to the work only when those who build do so in the counsel and spirit of the Lord, when the work is carried forward with an eye single to the glory of God, and according to His instructions.[2]

In 1909 she recommended:

> It is not now time for us to make a great display in large buildings. All our effort for display will not convert one soul. . . . Let us not testify by large and expensive buildings that we do not really believe what we teach. . . .[3]

In 1899 she wrote:

> No means are to be invested for unnecessary display, with the plea that it will give character to the work. Character is not given to the work by investing means in large buildings, but in maintaining the true standard of righteous principles, with noble Christ likeness of character. . . .[4]

When writing to Edson White from Australia, Ellen G. White indicated that simple but neat churches "will give character to the

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[1]Ellen G. White to Elders A. G. Daniells and E. R. Palmer, 26 September 1907, Letter D 328, 1907.

[2]Ellen G. White to Elder J. D. Rice, 11 December 1908, Letter R 342, 1908.

[3]Ellen G. White to Dear Brethren and Sisters in Washington, 6 June 1909, Letter 94a, 1909.

[4]Ellen G. White to my Brethren in America, 19 June 1899, Letter B 93, 1899.

important truths that we are advocating."[1]

Reasons for Simple Buildings

Perhaps all these counsels bring to mind a simple question: Why should Seventh-day Adventists build such simple and inexpensive meeting houses? Ellen G. White responded in a very simple manner:

> We are living in perilous time; judgment is to follow judgment. Let us now reveal in our works that we believe that the time of God's judgments is come, that we are approaching the day when there will be no certainty regarding anything in this world. By our works as well as our testimony we are to tell that the end of all things is at hand.[2]

The letter she wrote to her "Dear Brethren and Sisters in Washington" (1909) underlines what she had written two years before:

> I am instructed to say to our people: consider the warnings God has sent regarding the closing up of this earth's history. It is not now a time for us to make a great display in large buildings. . . . We are delivering sermons in every building we erect, and these things are taken as testimonies borne of our faith, while these very buildings testify that we are not expecting to move soon from this world to the heavenly.[3]

Ellen G. White balanced this aspect of simplicity with strong indications of functionality, neatness, and simple beauty of church buildings. She wrote to the brethren in Southern California: "All the buildings erected should be neat and tasteful. . . ."[4] She also emphasized the idea of a "comfortable and

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[1]Ellen G. White to Edwin White, 18 November 1895, Letter W 83, 1895.

[2]Ellen G. White to the Members of Oakland Church, 18 January 1907, Letter M 10, 1907.

[3]Ellen G. White to Dear Brethren and Sisters in Washington, 6 June 1909, Letter B 94a, 1909.

[4]Ellen G. White, MS 99, 1901.

convenient"[1] place because the building was dedicated to God. Later she wrote: "The house where God is worshipped should be in accordance with His character and majesty."[2] On another occasion she recommended: "Let the . . . believers be provided with neat, tasteful houses of worship."[3] The house where Jesus is to meet with His people should be neat and attractive.[4]

In her writings, E. G. White also deals with good ventilation and lighting of the building dedicated to the worship of God.[5]

It was not the intention of Ellen G. White to give the idea that a sanctuary or a neat meeting house was the only place where the Creator of the Universe could be worshipped. She recognized the happiness of "those who have a sanctuary, be it high or low in the city or among the rugged mountain caves."[6] Those who worshipped God in a very humble place she encouraged by saying:

> The Lord did not withhold His Spirit nor refuse His presence because of this . . . and if they worship Him in spirit and in truth, He never reproved or condemned their efforts.[7]

The Sacred and the Common

Ellen G. White used the idea of a sacred place in a very large context. It can include a small chapel or cave dedicated to worship, and also an institutional building such as the

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[1]Ellen G. White, The Story of Redemption (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1947), p. 153.

[2]White, Testimonies, 8:269. [3]Ibid., 6:101. [4]Ibid., 5:269.

[5]White, Evangelism, p. 380. [6]White, Testimonies, 5:491.

[7]Ellen G. White, MS 23, 1886.

Sanitariums[1] or one historical city.[2]

Referring several times to the example of Aaron's two sons, she wrote: "Sacred and common are placed upon a level."[3] In 1883, she emphasized the same idea by saying: "We need light from Heaven every hour, that we may distinguish between the sacred and the common."[4]

Writing to several gentlemen involved in the educational program of the Church, she advised:

> There is a distinction to be made between the sacred and the common, and we are accountable to God if we place human wisdom at the head as essential for education.[5]

It was in 1886 that she stated loudly and clearly that "the sacred and common are so blended that it is difficult to distinguish them." Therefore "the house or sanctuary dedicated to God should not be made a common place."[6] She goes so far as to say:

> The House erected for the worship of God should be cherished with sacred reverence by parents and by children. . . . Its sacredness should not be confused or mingled with the common everyday feelings or business life.[7]

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[1]Idem, Kress Collection of E. G. White Letters (Payson, AZ: Leaves of Autumn Books, 1979), p. 29: "Our sanitariums are to be regarded as sacred places."

[2]"In the providence of God, our publishing house is located on this sacred spot." See E. G. White, Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists (Basle, Switzerland: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), p. 171.

[3]White, Evangelism, p. 639.

[4]E. G. White, "Notes of Travel," Review and Herald, October 16, 1883, p. 371.

[5]Ellen G. White to Brethren Griggs and Howe, 23 August 1898, Letter G. 65, 1898.

[6]Ellen G. White, MS 23, 1886. [7]Ibid.

The quotations above clearly affirm that E. G. White advocated the idea that certain places are sacred because they were dedicated to the worship of God. With this in mind, she wrote in 1886:

> It [the house erected for worship] should not be used for common business of any kind. Schools should be disconnected from the room that is employed as a sanctuwry where we expect God to reveal His sacred presence. . . . The place should not be used as a lunch room, or as a business room, but simply for the worship of God.[1]

In the same article she gave a very important reason why these recommendations are so vital for the Seventh-day Adventist people:

> Our children are not receiving the proper training in regard to the sacredness of the house where God is worshiped, and where His word is opened to the people. It is not possible to have them form correct ideas of God's sanctuary if it is used for school-room and for common business purposes. . . . When children attend day school in the same place where they assemble to worship on the Sabbath, they cannot be made to feel the sacredness of the place and that they must enter with feelings of reverence.[2]

Three years later (1889) she again emphasized the idea of a sacred place of worship.

> From the sacredness which was attached to the early sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with His people.[3]

On the other hand, she saw that parts of the church building that were not dedicated or used exclusively for worship could be used without any negative feelings for secular purposes.

Later (1900-1915) Ellen White was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in St. Helena, California. This church served

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[1]White, MS 23, 1886. [2]Ibid.

[3]Ellen G. White, Testimonies, 5:491.

especially the Adventist families that worked in the sanitarium. Under a portion of the church building was the gymnasium which was used for secular programs as well as for Sabbath School work. Ellen White was fully aware of the use of this room, but she never had any word or reproof about secular programs that were held in the gymnasium. Arthur L. White's comment about the use of the basement of the church of St. Helena is very illuminating:

> This would lead me to believe that she would have no counsel of reproof to a church fortunate enough to have a basement or other rooms which could be used for gathering of our church members that might be of a secular nature conducted. . . .[1]

After visiting the Seventh-day Adventist church in San Francisco, E. G. White wrote her granddaughter Mabel a letter in which she emphasized two interesting aspects of this particular church. First she mentioned the beauty of ". . . large stained glass windows,"[2] and then she added:

> . . . in some of the lower rooms dispensary work is carried on in their well-equipped treatment rooms. The work that has been done here has been a blessing to many, especially since the fire.[3]

Colleges and Places of Worship

Some light on E. G. White's position on places of worship is shed by the kinds of facilities employed for worship in some of

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[1]Arthur L. White to Richard E. Hawley, 20 October 1971, Letter A16-0-2, 1971, Ellen G. White Research Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

[2]Ellen G. White to Mrs. Mabel E. Workman, 15 November 1906, Letter W 18a, 1906.

[3]Ibid.

the Seventh-day Adventist colleges established during her lifetime.

Avondale College

Ellen G. White spent nine years in Australia (1891-1900). These years were times of great challenge to the pioneer work. Perhaps the best known activity was the founding of Avondale College, that among Seventh-day Adventists has become some sort of model for the Church.

By 1895 the local union conference committee gave authorization to W. C. Sisley to start the master plan, which was to erect three main buildings: the administration building, classrooms, and dormitories for men and women. The erection of the school buildings was a slow process.

The school opened its doors for the first time on April 28, 1897, with "a staff of six . . . and with ten students."[1] One week later "about fifty students"[2] formed the student body at Avondale College.

Before the construction of the buildings were started, church services were conducted in the open air. While the staff and builders "boarded in Healey's Hotel, they used its large dining room for church services."[3]

When the sawmill was installed, the religious services

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[1]Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White: The Australian Years 1891-1900 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1983), p. 302.

[2]Ibid., p. 303.

[3]Milton R. Hook, "The Avondale School and Adventist Education Goals, 1894-1900" (Ed.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1978), p. 193.

were transferred to this building. Later church services were transferred to the area above the kitchen in one of the buildings. This room was far from an ideal place for worship, because it was a school room with school benches and desks. Obviously, the great need was a proper church building.

On August 15, 1887, the Avondale school board met to discuss the possibility of a church building. Under the influence of Ellen G. White, they decided to build a sanctuary "sixty-four feet long and thirty-two feet wide"[1] that was able to seat approximately four hundred people. The cost of the new church was about $2,750.[2]

The Bible Echo summarizes the event with these words:

> In conclusion, it should be stated that the erection of this building at this early stage of the school enterprise is mainly due to the faith and energy of Pastor S. N. Haskell and Mrs. E. G. White, and the rich blessings of God on their efforts. But for them, the building would perhaps not have been built for some time yet. . . .[3]

As Ellen G. White looked back to the beginning of the school she admitted in her diary that it was a mistake to build the school buildings first.[4] Later she wrote to Metcalfe Hare:

> We have this neglect to repent of, and if the Lord will forgive our neglect and our stupidity we will never repeat this mistake, but will make God first, and exalt his service in everything we do. . . . We will honor God, and show him true politeness by building a place where he can be our honored guest, to come in and meet with us, where all the association

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[1]Ibid., p. 197.

[2]Ibid., p. 200.

[3]"Dedication of the Church at Cooranborg," Bible Echo, November 8, 1897, p. 348.

[4]Ellen G. White, MS 175, 1897.

> will be of character that will show that we reverence God, and make him our first consideration. . . .[1]

Before further consideration of the above paragraph, let us consider some chapters of the history of some Adventist colleges here in North America.

Emmanuel Missionary College

As early as 1850, the Seventh-day Adventist Church began to make some attempts in order to educate its own children under the supervision of Christian teachers. It was not until 1868 that the young people began to receive some special attention. Professor Goodloe Harper Bell, in 1868, opened in Battle Creek a "select school"[2] just for young people. Professor Bell was the director of this school until 1872.

On June 3, 1872, this school was adopted by the General Conference as "the denomination's first official school."[3]

The autumn term opened in September with crowded conditions. To relieve the congestion, Bell began morning and evening classes, especially for those working in the nearby Review publishing plant. With the consent of the local church, the school shifted to the church building for the winter term beginning in mid-December. "For more than a year the school met in the church."[4]

On February 11, 1875, the "school" was named more "for the sake of convenience than for any other reason"[5] Battle Creek College.

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[1]Ellen G. White to Metcalfe Hare, 17 August, 1897, Letter 57, 1897.

[2]Emmett K. VandeVere, The Wisdom Seekers (Nashville, TN: Southern Pub. Assn., 1972), p. 16.

[3]Ibid., p. 18. [4]Ibid. [5]Ibid., p. 26.

After several years of service, "on April 12, 1901, the stockholders of the Seventh-day Adventist Central Educational Association voted unanimously"[1] to relocate the college. Battle Creek College was transferred to Berrien Springs, Michigan. In the village of Berrien Springs some improvised arrangements were made.

> The College . . . rented the former Berrien County courthouse--built in 1839 and abandoned in 1894 when the county seat moved to St. Joseph, the old county office building, the sheriff's residence, the jail, and barn for their chapel, classrooms, offices, and storage.[2]

The old courthouse that for years had been a dance hall was now rented and served as the College chapel. Later during the summer, the Sabbath School and Church met in the Grove--first in a tent, later in the pavilion.[3] During the winter, the congregation met in the dining room and in the study hall auditorium. During the years 1926-1927, a large auditorium with a seating capacity of one thousand was erected.[4] This building was also used as a chapel.

By the year 1949 some of the people in Emmanuel Missionary College began to speak about the necessity of a separate chapel for the college. Only in 1959, after the merger of E.M.C. with Potomac University, was this dream made a reality with the erection of Pioneer Memorial Church, fifty-eight years after the school was in its new location.

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[1] Ibid., p. 91.

[2] Ibid., p. 99.

[3] Ibid., p. 110.

[4] Ibid., p. 167.

South Lancaster School

Until early 1882 Battle Creek College was the only SDA college in existence. At the twentieth annual session of the General Conference (December 1881) it was recommended that elementary schools be established where students could pursue "such branches of study as it will be necessary for them to master before entering the College at Battle Creek."[1]

With this purpose, South Lancaster School opened on April 19, 1882. Its first building was the old Seventh-day Adventist chapel. The number of students was nineteen. When the school opened in August for its second term, the large number of students forced the faculty to move from the old building to the basement of the new village church.

In 1886 the South Lancaster School was called the South Lancaster Academy, and it started to offer secondary training courses. By the Fall of 1894, the Academy Hall building was enlarged for classwork, with new rooms, offices and a library. At the same time the "chapel in the second floor was also enlarged."[2] The village Church was used for the religious services during the Sabbath.

On February 17, 1922, the New England Conference voted to change the name of the South Lancaster Academy to Atlantic Union College. Beginning in 1954, the Machlan Auditorium was used as a

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[1]"General Conference," Review and Herald, December 13, 1881, p. 376.

[2]Myron F. Wehtje, And There Was Light (South Lancaster, MA: Atlantic Press, 1982), p. 110.

"church building" for the college family.[1] Only in the Spring of 1981, did the college finally complete its new church. It is clear that for almost a century this educational institution did not have a regular church building for its students and members.

Pacific Union College

The academy at Healdsburg was the forerunner of Pacific Union College (PUC), from 1882 until 1908. Our attention here is given to the history of PUC in Angwin from 1909 to the present.

The mountain property in Angwin cost $40,000. It had been "a popular refuge for city dwellers at vacation time."[2] Dedicatory services were held on September 29, 1909, in the chapel which had been "formerly the dance hall of the resort."[3] This room served as a chapel and church to the College for several years. The College Church "was organized in 1909 with forty-two charter members."[4]

The first building project was a girls' dormitory; the second a classroom building. Construction on the administration building began in 1912. The first part of this project, finished in 1913, "contained the chapel, offices, library and several classrooms."[5]

The construction of the Pacific Auditorium gave some relief to the crowded Irwin Chapel. The auditorium was used for church and graduation services until 1967.

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[1] Ibid., p. 241.

[2] Walter Utt, A Mountain, A Pickax, a College, a History of Pacific Union College (Angwin, CA: Pacific Union College Press, 1968), p. 46.

[3] Ibid. [4] Ibid., p. 73. [5] Ibid., p. 65.

On January 6, 1968,

> the congregation moved in procession from Irwin Hall and from the Pacific Auditorium to the new Sanctuary for the first services, a little over 58 years after the Pacific Union College church was organized.[1]

The cost of the new building was $1,020,000.

A situation similar to these occurred in most Seventh-day Adventist colleges both in North America and in other continents. This fact naturally raises some questions in relation to what was emphasized by Mrs. White in her letter to Metcalfe Hare. Was this letter or testimony of local character? Was it repeated to the leaders of Emmanuel Missionary College, Pacific Union College, and Atlantic Union College? Was it ever published?

Summary

The writings of Ellen G. White contain some principles dealing with places of worship. Among these are the following:

1. Simplicity and neatness
2. Beauty, but avoidance of unnecessary luxury
3. Intelligent economy that speaks about internal values rather than external appearance
4. Functionality or serviceability (ventilation, illumination, and acoustics)
5. Different styles that "blend in" with the culture of the country or with the immediate area in the community.

Because of the act of dedication, the meeting house, large or small, simple or rich, becomes a sacred spot, therefore

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[1]Ibid., p. 136.

it should be used only for worship services. In this respect Ellen G. White was in harmony with the majority of Christians in the nineteenth century who based such a belief on the sacredness of the Jewish temple.

Nevertheless, it is clear from her letters that not all parts of the church building complex were to be considered sacred, only that portion of the building dedicated to worship. Therefore, other sections, such as the basement or annex could be used for secular functions, which in themselves could glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

White definitely did not confine the presence of God to any particular place of worship, but she called the attention of the Christian believers to unite their efforts to build small chapels for their respective congregations. She did not approve the idea that chapels or sanctuaries are not needed and that Christian people could just as well meet in homes for worship.

The idea of multipurpose hall or building was not espoused by Ellen G. White. However, during her lifetime several church institutions used a variety of non-dedicated meeting places as places of worship for decades.

It is necessary to expand the concept of the multi-purpose building, and this is our task in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

CURRENT TRENDS IN CHURCH BUILDINGS

In the light of the information gathered from the time of Solomon's temple until the present, there are three main concepts in relationship to church buildings that emerge:

1. The church building as the house of God
2. The home church
3. The multi-purpose building.

The Church as a House of God

The concept of church as a house of God appears to be the ideal for the majority of Christians. The church building is a sacred spot set apart for worship and adoration. This basic idea which seems to have originated with the sacredness of the Old Testament sanctuary was resurrected during the fourth century,[1] was held and taught throughout the Middle Ages, was unaffected by the Reformation, and is defended today by many thousands of Christian congregations. Perhaps the underlying reason for this is a continuing concern about the distinction between the secular and the sacred.

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[1] See Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, X.4.3; X.42,45. Cf. Mishnah Kelim 1:6-9.

The Home Church

The home church based in New Testament times is the ideal for many. This ideal was reborn in England and Scotland during the closing years of World War II. About a decade later some examples of the home church could be found in North America.[1]

Generally speaking, there are two modalities of home church in North America:[2] (1) groups of interaction as part of one congregation in order to strengthen the internal life of the church; and (2) interdenominational groups that meet for prayer, study, and social concern without any church affiliation. For many the home church is an open door of hope for liberty, fellowship, and interaction. Many others look to it as a reaction against organization, structure, and clericalism.[3] Those who advocate the home church agree that the ideal place of meeting is said to be the home, but some circumstances lead them to meet in school

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[1] See Donald R. Allen, Barefoot in the Church (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960); Charles M. Olsen, The Base Church (Atlanta, GA: Forum House Publishers, 1973); Arthur L. Foster, ed., The House Church Evolving (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1976); Malcolm Boyd, ed., The Underground Church (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963); Philip Anderson and Phoebe Anderson, The House Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975); Arthur L. Foster and Philip Anderson, "The House Church: Context and Form; Purpose and Process," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, December 1970.

[2] Some of the disadvantages of the home church are: (1) few homes today have enough space for a large group of people, (2) if the members of the congregation want to minister to the community, they need a permanent building, (3) a home church does not provide the facilities necessary for service, nor the freedom of schedule that the congregation may need.

[3] See Joyce V. Thurman, New Wineskins, A Study of the House Church Movement (Frankfurt, Germany: Verlag Peter Lang, 1982).

buildings, barns, rented halls, etc. As happened in the Christian church of the first centuries, the sacred and the secular are mingled together.[1]

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[1]"It is necessary to re-examine the question of relationship of the sacred and the secular, not in the light of Church history from the fourth century onwards, but in connection with the New Testament teaching. . . .

"The outlook of the New Testament writers generally may be summarized in the form of three propositions. First, the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane had been brought to an end through Christ. Secondly, there is according to the New Testament position no exclusive place of encounter with God; anywhere can be the place of his presence. He may be met by the member of a caravan on the road to Damascus or by an itinerant preacher in the desert between Jerusalem and Gaza. Thirdly, in so far as there is a temple any longer, it is not one constructed of stone; it is a community" (J. G. Davies, The Secular Use of Church Buildings [New York: Seabury Press, 1968], p. 222).

A little further on this same author uses the Christological controversy, related to the names of Nestorius and Eutyches and indicates that "the Chalcedonian Definition, opposing these two heresies, asserted that the Godhead and the manhood are in Christ 'without confusion, without change, without division, without separation'. The same adverbs are to be applied to the sacred and the secular; they are not to be confused by being merged with one another in an undifferentiated unity. . ." (ibid., p. 223). Finally he says: "The content of the Church's teaching must be the unity of the sacred and the secular in and through Christ" (Ibid., p. 235).

After some observations about fear and prejudice on the part of many Christians about the relationship between the sacred and the secular, Davies asks: "How are this fear and this prejudice to be overcome? There are various factors that may contribute to this end--patient teaching, and appeal to past practice and a demonstration of the essential unity of life by employing existing churches for secular activities and by planning new ones for multipurpose use" (Ibid., p. 240).

Speaking to this issue, Robert E. Rambusch has stated: "Many people see the religious multipurpose building as an uneasy compromise between the sacred and the profane, the temple and the money-changers, the extraordinary and ordinary. They fail to see that a multi-purpose building can incarnate the transcendent in the every day" (In Ralph L. Belknap, Effective Use of Church Space [Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978], p. 54).

From a Roman Catholic point of view, Walbert Buhlmann writes: "We must ask ourselves what precisely is the Church's task in the world and decide, once for all, which image of the Church to preserve: the sacral, monumental and archaic, or the simple, evangelical and in tune with the times.

"This poses the real problem of sacred buildings. What we have come to regard as natural and unquestionable turns out to be

The Multi-Purpose Space

The multi-purpose space considered by some today as a middle ground or a line between two ideals, gives opportunity for the full utilization of one building in order to serve both the congregation and the community better. A multi-purpose space can be a room or a building complex that is fully used in order to fulfill the mission of the church. "Multiple use is a means to an end. The end is full utilization."[1]

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no more than a phenomenon of history (recent history at that) which finds no support in the gospel. In Judaism and in all pre-Christian religions, the sacred was a central concept: it could be a particular place or person set apart for the divine, holy, powerful, associated with reverence, fear, and taboo. But Christ desacralized the domain of the sacred or, better, he sanctified the whole world and all men (Jn 17:17). No longer only in the temple, or on this or that hill, but in every place will the Father be worshipped in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:21-24). The temple is replaced by the person of Christ, for 'here is one greater than the temple' (Mt 12:6) and by the congregation, the people of God. The apostles drew further inferences: 'We are the temple of the living God. . . . Do you not know that your flesh is a temple of the living God?' (2 Cor 6:16; cf. 1 Cor 6:19). 'Let yourselves be built up as living stones into a spiritual temple' (1 Peter 2:5). Consequently, Christians built no temple but assembled in their own houses, then in community buildings and finally in basilicas designed as assembly places. Gradually, the tendency towards resacralizing grew. But even in the middle ages the church of the people of God was often available for all purposes and not just for worship: for the agape, for trials, for political assemblies and for markets (leading, of course, to abuse). Until 200 years ago, churches were nearly always multi-purpose buildings, in which the whole life of the congregation was played out. Only since then has worship and the rest of the life of the congregation been separated. This is not an ideal, it is rather a warning sign.

"Nowadays, instead of churches designed exclusively for worship, we are beginning to build community centers where the Christian community can again be found with all its preoccupations, hopes and activities" (Walbert Buhlmann, The Coming of the Third Church [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Book, 1978], pp. 367, 368).

[1]Edwin C. Lynn, Tired Dragons (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 26.

The concept of a multi-purpose space does not imply that this room or that building could serve for every imaginable use. The only real or true criterion to be followed in a multi-purpose space is to serve people's needs.

Richard Critz wrote:

> If the room is primarily for use by people, then its scale, proportions, articulations, textures, colors, acoustic qualities, temperature and ventilation controls--all, must be designed for people.[1]

This clearly indicates that a multi-purpose space is not just any room or an unimaginative building. In most cases, a multi-purpose building is built after serious study and planning in order to erect a room or a building that could house many activities of the congregation and also take in consideration all regulations for safety, according to the laws of the county or state.

This kind of building could be defined with the words of Bishop Bekkers as a "kind of great livingroom, a place where the faithful come together to meet the Lord, and one another in the Lord";[2] or as "a functional space created for celebrating Christian assembly."[3]

One of the best-known advocates of multi-purpose building in North America is architect Edward Anders Sovik. In his book

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[1]Richard Critz, "Celebration, Worship, and the Centrum," Your Church, November-December 1973, p. 37.

[2]Frederic Debuyst, Modern Architecture and Christian Celebration (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1968), p. 9.

[3]Ibid., p. 30.

Architecture for Worship,[1] he gives a great deal of useful information about technical details to be considered in a multi-purpose room or "centrum" as he calls it. He suggests that in order to be practical this "centrum" should

1. Be designed for people
2. Have convenient storage space
3. Have a flat floor
4. Use the advantages of chairs
5. Have a moveable platform
6. Have a small pulpit

It is possible to indicate that the essentials of the multi-purpose space are non-ecclesiastical architecture, yet with dignified and substantial appearance. However, small details such as a tower or a cross can give a distinctive touch of purpose to the building.

Uses of the Multi-Purpose Building

As mentioned above, this "centrum" is a tool. Therefore, the full utilization of the building needs to take into consideration service to the congregation as well as to the community. It could be utilized for programs for senior citizens, Family Planning groups, Adult Alphabetization, Single Parents, Parent and Child Relationship lectures, Divorce Support groups, lectures, cooking schools, etc. Certainly worship would have preferential consideration.

When we talk about worship, we speak not only of personal

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[1] Architecture for Worship (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973).

or private devotion but also of a time of celebration, a time for meeting one another as members of the body of Christ. "This is not to say that worship must now degenerate into togetherness or being 'all-matey with the Almighty'."[1]

Another aspect of the multi-purpose building is the gathering of the congregation for a variety of programs and activities related to its own benefit and needs, such as educational programs and social activities. The multi-purpose space needs to be an all-embracing center for the congregation.

Advantages of the Multi-Purpose Space

There are different views of the mission of the church. However it is clear that the church exists not for itself but for the benefit of others, because when a church limits its services only to its members it is self-centered. If it ignores the appeals and the needs of the community, the church is insensitive. The congregation must act as neighbors, remembering that neighbors are defined as persons who turn to those in need.

Servant church. This new vision of the congregation as a servant of the community gives a new dimension to the idea of a multi-purpose building.

There is no word that describes more accurately the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ than "service." "But I am among you," says the Lord, "as the one who serves" (diakonōn, Luke 22:27).

The basic example and teaching about the church as a servant

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[1]Horace T. Allen, "New Spaces for the Gathering Community," Your Church, March-April 1972, p. 24.

is the life and teaching of Jesus Christ (Matt 20:28; Mark 9:35; 10:42; Luke 13:30; 14:41; John 13:1-17). He gave a summary statement on servanthood saying:

> Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
> For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;
> Naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'
> Then the righteous will answer Him saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?
> And when did we see You stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?
> And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?
> And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brother of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me' (Matt 25:34-40).

Even church buildings are not meant just to be seen and admired but to be used for the glory of the Creator and for the uplifting of humanity.[1] The role of the church in our society needs to be that of a servant, not only once a week but seven days a week; through education, social work, and worship. As a servant,[2]

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[1] "Under the heading 'Heretical building programme', a working party of the World Council of Churches writes: 'As there can be heretical structures, so also there can be heretical buildings. They must be considered heretical if they encourage in the congregation a feeling of religious security within the walls of an isolated holy place. They must be rejected if they suggest introversion and flight from the world and lead worshippers to long for the joys of heaven far away from all the labours of this world and thus to overlook the fact that heaven is only realized on earth when day-to-day relations between men are made holy both in the congregation and outside it!" Die Kirche fur andere in Ringen um Strukturen missionarischer Gemeinden, ORK, Geneva, 1967, Buhlmann, p. 369.

[2] Servant: cf. Matt 20:26 (diakonos); Matt 22:13 (diakonois); Rom 16:21 (diakonon); service, serving: Luke 22:26 (diakonon); cf. Luke 22:27 (diakonei); minister: Matt 20:26 (diakonasamen); cf.

the church needs to plan its mission toward the community.[1]

Before building, a basic question that each congregation needs to answer is: What shall we build? The answer requires careful study, including consideration about the needs of the congregation and the community, because the building that the congregation erects needs to be a tool for service. Perhaps the final question should be: For whom shall we build? Buhlmann writes:

> We need to be continually re-examining the question of the true nature of mission. Christ did not commission us to build churches but to build up the Church, that is, to heal the sick, cast out devils, preach the gospel and gather disciples. This does demand a degree of space or some buildings; but the problem can be solved quite simply along the lines adopted by Christians of the early centuries and by the Independent Churches today.[2]

Financial advantages of multi-purpose space. It is clear that church buildings are not erected for profit. Nevertheless their cost and the use of them at their maximum capacity better justifies the investment made. In order for the church to carry its ministry to the total needs of mankind, the church normally needs some buildings. If building and maintenance costs are carefully considered, it appears as poor Christian stewardship to make a large investment in a building that is often going unused

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Rom 13:4; 15:8; ministered: Mark 1:14 (diakonoun); ministering: Rom 15:25 (diakonon); "deacons" (literally "servants"). Hans Kung, The Church (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1976), p. 511. ". . . diakoneo (same root word as diakonos) a common verb, to minister . . . to serve." A. T. Roberts, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1931), 4:575.

[1]See Charles V. Willie, Church Action in the World (New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1969).

[2]Buhlmann, p. 370.

six days of every week. Buhlmann remarks, "No institution in the world could allow its resources to be so badly utilized as the church."[1]

Traditionally, in construction, cost has been figured on the basis of a certain number of dollars per square foot. It is necessary to see that full utilization of any building may change this perspective.[2]

Some Examples of Multi-Purpose Space

This chapter could not conclude without introducing some examples of multi-purpose buildings. The number of such structures is growing rapidly, not only among the Protestant churches, but much more among the Roman Catholic Church both in North America and abroad.

Second Reformed Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan. After three years of consultation and study, the Kalamazoo, Michigan, congregation of the Reformed Church decided to build a structure that would provide space necessary for total ministry. This new building is adjacent to Western Michigan University.

The sacntuary/meeting room and the administrative unit cover a total of 17,160 square feet. The building is simple yet dignified.

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[1] Ibid., p. 368.

[2] "Taking a figure of $50 per square foot as an example of construction prices and one week as a standard measure of time for this purpose, a church building that is occupied only once a week would have a usage cost of $50 per square foot. But, used twice a week, such as with simultaneous sessions of worship and church school, the usage cost would be $50 divided by two, or $25 per square foot." Belknap, p. 58.

The large nave seats 750 to 1000 people. The flat floor and flexible seating (chairs) makes the meeting room available for almost any desired use. The meeting room is accessible without steps.

The platform is made in moveable sections which can be removed very easily in a few minutes. The choir, as part of the congregation, is seated at the same level as the congregation beside the organ.

At the time of my visit to their worship service they held a sensible and spiritual service. A very attentive, friendly congregation filled the sanctuary.

One week before my visit the meeting room had been used for a large banquet to give a cordial farewell to their senior minister.

The three people with whom I had an opportunity to speak about the building and its use showed a very clear line of thinking about the building and the idea of total ministry[1]--not only for the congregation but also for the community. They are obviously proud of their building.

Church of the Saviour, R.C.A., Coopersville, Michigan. The small congregation of the Reformed Church in America, in Coopersville, Michigan, dedicated their church building in 1979 to the needs of the congregation and to the entire community. They call their building "A Center for Education and Community Life."

This is a very attractive, rectangular, yet small building.

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[1]See Donald J. Bruggink, "Architecture for Total Ministry," Your Church, November-December 1974, pp. 42-44.

The sanctuary, with moveable seating and terrazzo floor, can be used for meetings of all types.

The most impressive feature is the great table at the front of the sanctuary. This table is constructed like a very large picnic table with benches on both sides. Approximately forty people can sit at this table for the Lord's supper. In the middle of the table rests a reading stand for the Bible, which identifies the space as a place of proclamation.

The exterior of the building is characterized by two truncated steeples in which one can see a tongue of flame and the sword of the Spirit as well as some representation of the bowl, pitcher, and goblets for the Lord's supper.

The building is open seven days a week in order to serve the congregation and the community.[1]

Other Examples of Multi-Purpose Buildings

The First Street United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana, is the result of the union of two Methodist congregations. The final result is a centrum--a one-million-dollar facility, opened seven days a week in order to help the local congregation and the community.[2]

St. Michael's Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is a Roman Catholic church open to the idea of a centrum. This

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[1]See Donald J. Bruggink and Carl H. Droppers, When Faith Takes Form (Grand Rapids, MI: W. E. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1971), pp. 109-15.

[2]See Harold E. Wagoner, "The Architect's Viewpoint," Your Church, January-February 1974, pp. 28-38.

multi-purpose building seats 600-700 people. For them the centrum is not sacrosanct.[1] The one-room space has one moveable platform that can be used in the center of the room or at one side.[2]

Charles City United Methodist Church, Iowa, and Our Lady of the Brook, Northbrook, Illinois, are two other examples of multi-purpose buildings.[3]

In the city of Vettelschoss, Germany, a Catholic church shows a little variation in a multi-purpose space. The architect

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[1] Buhlmann, as a Catholic leader comments:

"We may leave what is well founded in peace. Each age has its own style. But for the time to come, we make the following recommendations, in the spirit of Vatican II:

-We should look for new, dynamic but more modest activities, which are not tied to rigid institutions or to ambitious building programmes.

-We must one day give up buildings as a habit, and only allow new building in unavoidable exceptional cases.

-When we have to build, we should look for architects capable of taking a middle way between the traditional, often ponderous mission style and the modern expensive techniques, and who can unite simplicity with beauty, solidity and a functional style.

-We should promote the idea of multi-purpose buildings which, depending on the environment, can be anything from a hut to a community centre in concrete.

-Our money must first and foremost be put into work which is plainly religious and social, e.g., catechists, Bible, the mass media, founding-cooperatives. We should invest also in means of improving living conditions.

-Our big buildings must be thrown open to the poor, so that we can welcome them and give them the help they need; then the buildings will cease to excite criticism.

-Once the buildings needed as bases for church action are available, then our brothers and expert lay helpers in them should be placed at the disposal of the people and even the local government." Buhlmann, p. 371.

[2] See "Interview with Ed. Sovik," Your Church, September-October, 1983, pp. 6-8, 53.

[3] Critz, pp. 36-46.

did not provide a large room, but several rooms, all of which have multipurpose uses. However, one small room in the building contains as permanent furniture, the altar and the baptismal font. This room can be called a small sanctuary. It seats approximately sixty people.[1]

Another very impressive multi-purpose space is the chapel of the Ecumenical Center of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland.[2]

In a new residential area in Osaka, Japan, it was impossible to purchase land for a church building, but the United Presbyterian Church saw one possibility. The new residential area needed a nursery for the children of working parents and a center for adult education. With this purpose in mind, land was secured. A very functional building that houses the nursery for children has been erected. In the same building, however, the two large rooms are used as a chapel on Sundays. Harold F. Fredsell writes:

> To start with the building needs of a community, rather than the needs of the congregation, could convince those outside the church that we really mean what we say.[3]

Some Disadvantages of the Multi-Purpose Building

Several voices proclaim the disadvantages of the multi-purpose space. To some, the multi-purpose building does not fulfill

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[1]See Justus Dahinden, "Catholic Church, Vettelschoss, Germany," Your Church, November-December 1970, pp. 12-14.

[2]Harold F. Fredsell, "Nothing Is Nailed Down," Your Church, September-October 1969, pp. 24, 25, 68.

[3]Harold F. Fredsell, "A Church for Others," Your Church, March-April 1970, p. 49.

the necessary demands for worship, education, and fellowship. They say that the same place where young people and some of the adult families congregate to find pleasure in their social programs can never be used to find a real experience of worship.[1]

For those more theologically orientated individuals, the separation between the sacred and the secular presents a problem that is very difficult to solve.

For several other people, flexibility of worship arrangement, such as the mobility of the furniture causes problems. Such an arrangement necessitates having a custodial staff in order to keep the furniture in good condition. Storage areas can be a great problem, for a flexible-use centrum needs to have adequate chairs for each program.

Wedding ceremonies can provide another problem. Each couple may wish to have a new arrangement, perhaps different from that of the usual worship design.

Seventh-day Adventists and Multi-Purpose Space

It is necessary to emphasize that it would be unwise for any congregation to launch or to initiate a program that the church building cannot house.

Perhaps this has been the greatest problem of many SDA church buildings both in North America and abroad. Because of various circumstances, the congregation exhausts its resources building a traditional meeting house and, generally speaking, fails

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[1]See Orland A. Dirlam, "The Ministry of Architecture," Your Church, July-August 1971, pp. 12-15, 24-32.

to provide the necessary ancillary facilities to properly serve its own needs and those of the community.

One example of this is in the Lake Titicaca Mission that has 31,290 church members as of January 1, 1984. The mission has 467 church buildings, 431 of which have some facilities for the children's Sabbath School--which also serve the Dorcas society. But of these 467 church buildings there is no place for social activities, or community service.

The president of the Mission writes that many of these church buildings, because of necessity, are presently being used as elementary schools during the week. Further, he indicates that in many places the Seventh-day Adventist building is the only meeting place of the entire village, but because it was dedicated for worship, it cannot be used for any other purpose. This situation certainly does not help to maintain good relations with the people of the community. The president goes on to say that if the building were not dedicated for worship, the brethren could allow the building to be used for other activities.[1]

From the Central Chile Conference the president indicates that necessity has forced them to start with multi-purpose buildings as the only solution in order to give some "home or place" to many Seventh-day Adventist companies that have no resources for a traditional church building.[2] For many of these companies the multi-purpose space will be all that they will get because of the

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[1]Eliezer Sanchez to Eduardo Zurita, 26 February 1984.

[2]Ruben Pereyra to Eduardo Zurita, 26 January 1984.

financial problems. Others, perhaps, will use a multi-purpose building as a temporary solution until they have the necessary means for a temple, at which time the multi-purpose space will be used as a school or a social gathering place.

From El Salvador Mission, Jose Guevara indicates that many of the worship services during the Sabbath are celebrated in halls that have other uses during the week.[1]

The president of the Central Amazon Mission (Brazil) indicates that because of necessity, many Seventh-day Adventist congregations have to meet Sabbath after Sabbath in rented buildings. There is hope that after some years a permanent church building will be a reality.[2] The same concern and hope is expressed by the president of the North Dominican Mission.[3]

From the Southeast Mexican Conference, Daniel Sosa writes, at the present time 500 church buildings are needed so that each Seventh-day Adventist congregation can have its own place of worship. According to their projected annual growth, in the next five years they will need 125 additional temples.[4] The cost of a new church building with a capacity of 250-300 seats is around $50,000.[5]

These few examples can be multiplied many times over, based on a small informal survey answered by twenty-five presidents from

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[1]Jose Guevara to Eduardo Zurita, 8 February 1984.

[2]Amador Pimenta to Eduardo Zurita, 25 January 1984.

[3]Alfredo Gaona B. to Eduardo Zurita, 27 January 1984.

[4]Daniel Sosa R. to Eduardo Zurita, 3 March 1984.

[5]This Conference needs the grand total of $25,000,000 to provide a church building for each congregation.

some SDA Conferences and Missions in Latin America. The answers suggest that something needs to be done as soon as possible. We may be slowing down the growth of the church by running behind an ideal that in many places will never become reality. Perhaps we need to realize that in many places a simple multi-purpose building will be the only structure the church will ever be able to afford.

Summary

From current literature, both from the Evangelical and Roman Catholic Church, it is clear that people are concerned with better stewardship and proper use of church buildings.

There is agreement among Protestant and Catholics that the function of the church is to be a servant of the community, and that church buildings need to be a tool in this ideal of a full ministry to the congregation and the community.

Considering the many activities promoted by the Evangelical and Catholic churches, the multi-purpose building is considered by many the best solution in order to house these activities.

Finally, the SDA Church needs to confront its own reality. Under the present situation it needs to look favorably on the idea of a multi-purpose building as a solution for the rapid growth of the Church in Latin America.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Early biblical history makes reference to simple places of worship of which an altar was usually a vital component. When Israel was delivered from bondage, the Israelites received the command to build a sanctuary. It was a temporary tent and certainly was never intended to be a model of a place for Christian worship. Later, under Solomon, a temple was built. Rival temples were erected later, at least in Beersheba and Egypt.

The details of the daily, weekly, and annual sacrifices in the sanctuary and the temple are provided. There is no biblical information about other places of worship of the true God in Palestine before the Babylonian exile.

In the New Testament, the temple and the synagogue appear as the two great institutions that polarized the life of the Jewish nation. The synagogue was a gathering place for the children, youth, and adults as a center of education, fellowship, and worship. The New Testament also witnesses to the origin of another institution, the home church.

It is necessary to emphasize that the New Testament is silent about the separation between the sacred and the secular and also about consecrated places of worship. Christ and Paul indicated that

God does not dwell in specific places, but in the midst of sincere worshipers.

The sayings of Jesus, Stephen, and Paul provide the theological basis that allowed the first Christians to worship in simple home churches.

The fourth century brought back the old Jewish idea of a sacred place. Christian church buildings became places for worship, also for relics and memorials for the martyrs. This idea was continued during the Middle Ages and is still alive today.

Among the reformers, John Calvin opposed the idea of identifying a preaching hall with the house of God. The Anabaptists, Puritans, Quakers, Mennonites, Hutterites, and early Adventists met in places not reserved exclusively for worship. Ellen G. White appears as a bridge between Old Testament times and the mid-nineteenth century concerning consecrated places of worship.

With the theological-historical study as a background, the multi-purpose church building is then suggested as a practical intermediate solution to the problem of the lack of adequate facilities faced by many Seventh-day Adventist congregations in Latin America and elsewhere today.

Conclusions

This paper recognizes and accepts what the Bible teaches with respect to places of worship. Certainly, it is possible to notice a partial difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament with regard to places of worship that needs to be clearly understood, especially in the light of Jesus' own statements.

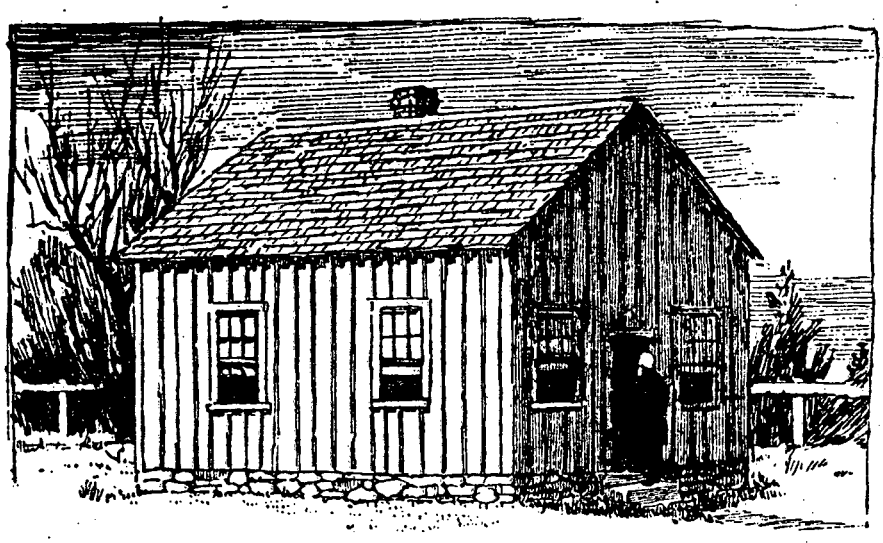
The advice of E. G. White points to the ideal of a place dedicated exclusively for worship. However, as it sometimes happened in White's lifetime, it sometimes takes several years to reach the ideal because of economic problems. The intermediate function of the multi-purpose building would provide the needed space until the ideal solution could be reached.

Finally I would like to emphasize that as Seventh-day Adventists we need to confront reality with reality and recognize that our present church buildings do not offer a solution for our needs nor for those of the community.

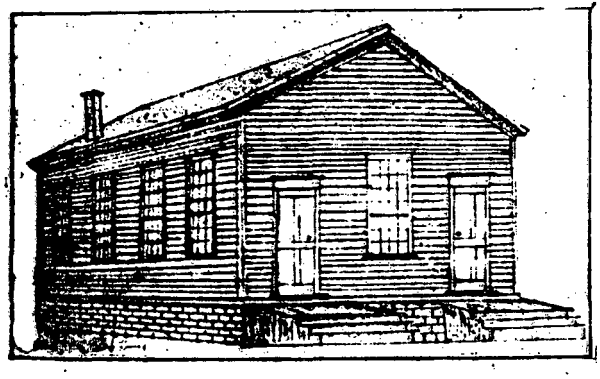
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SOME EARLY SDA MEETING HOUSES IN MICHIGAN

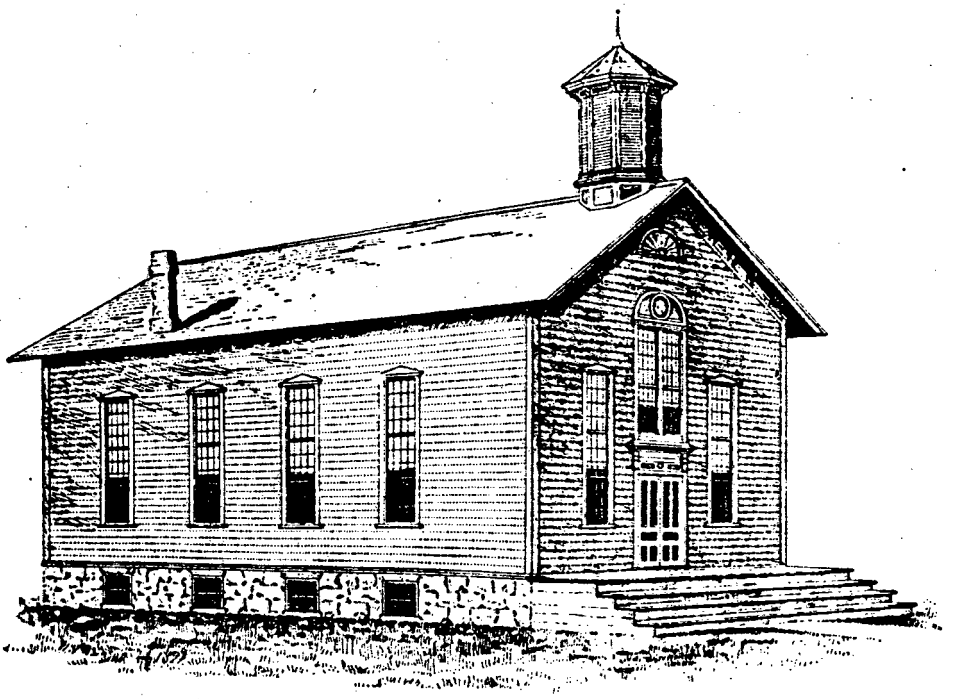


THE FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MEETING-HOUSE.

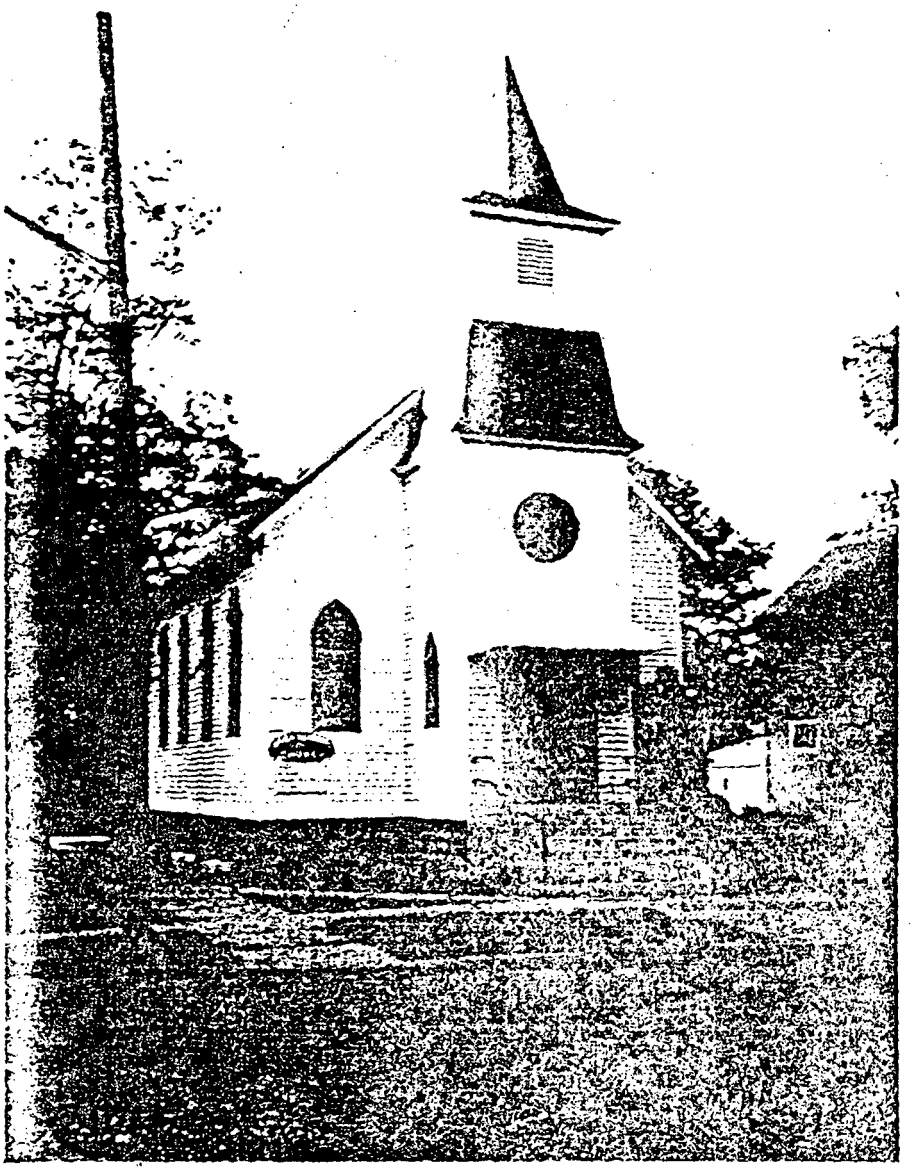


Second S. D. A. Church in Battle Creek.

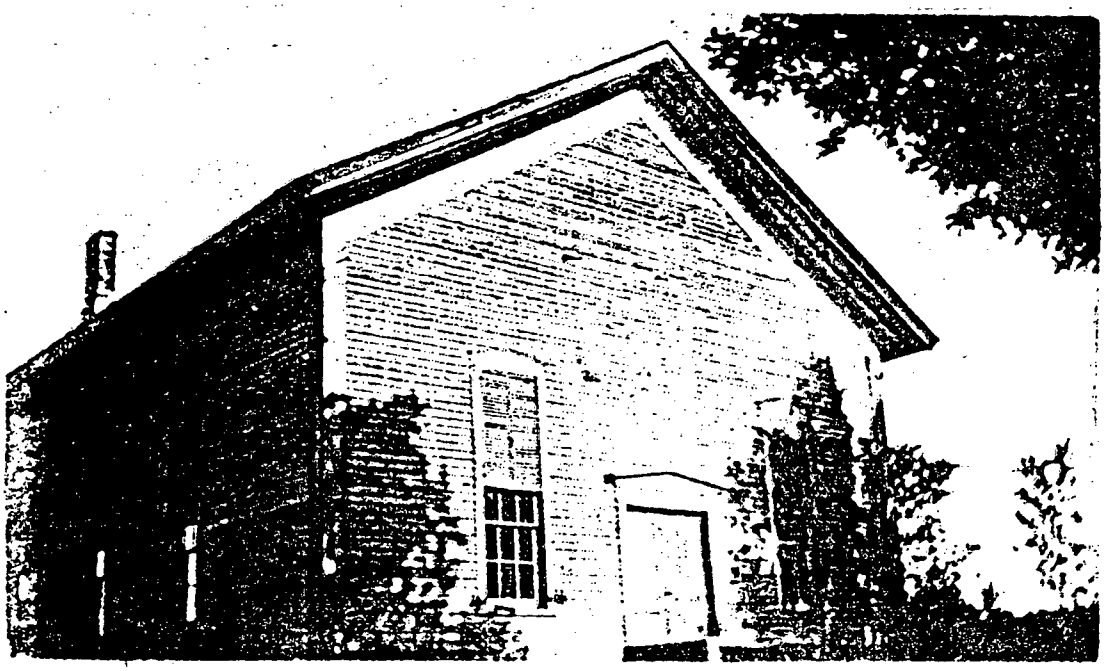
NOTE: The original pictures of these churches are in the Heritage Room of Andrews University.



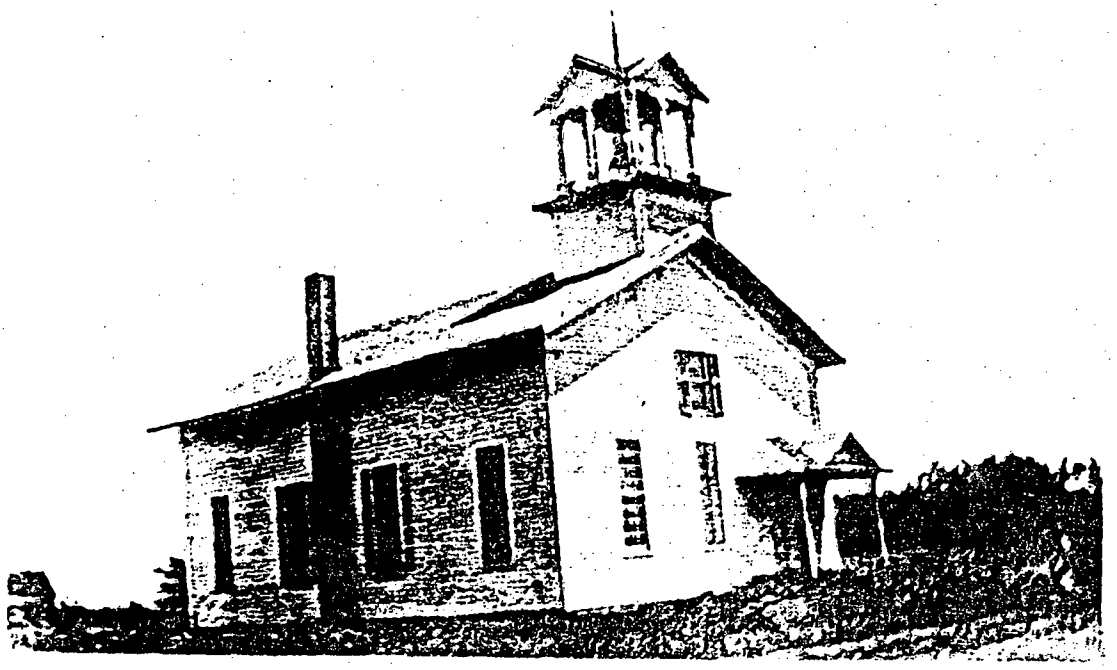
THE THIRD MEETINGHOUSE IN BATTLE CREEK.



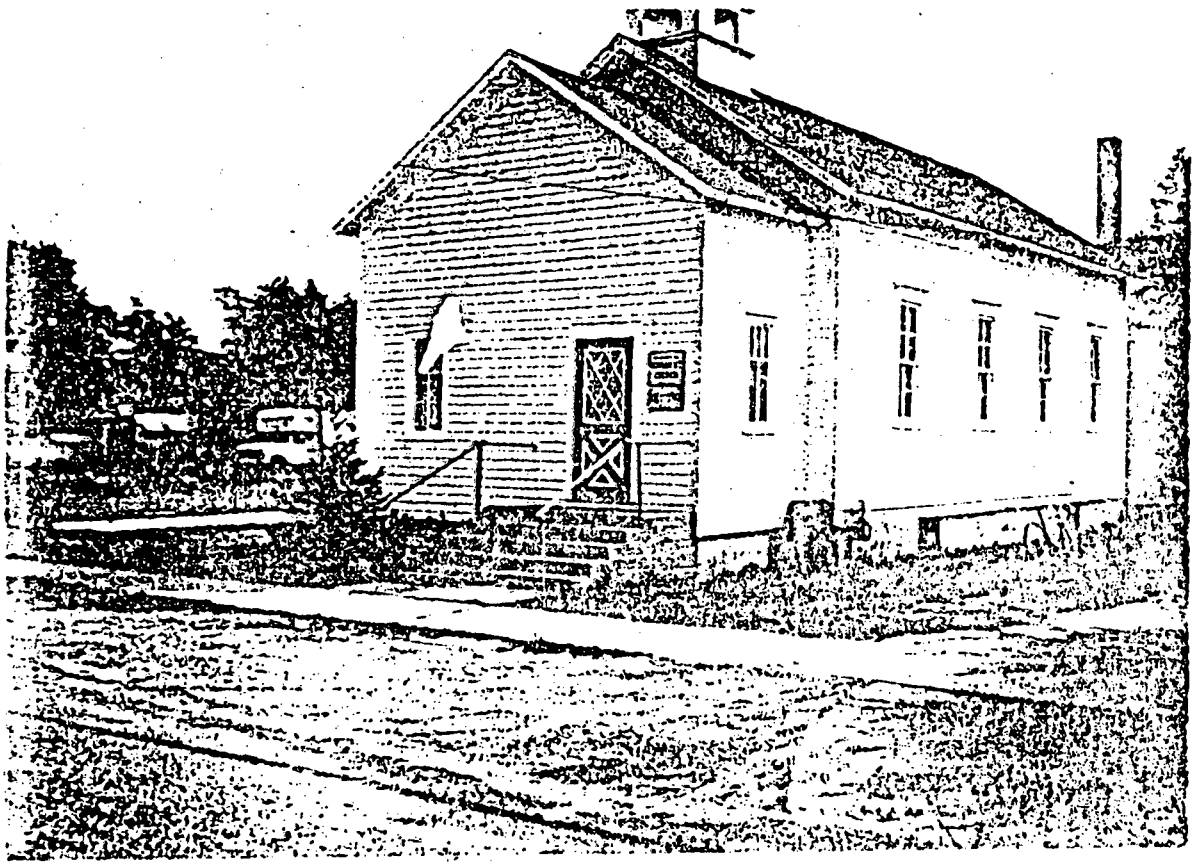
The Traverse Church



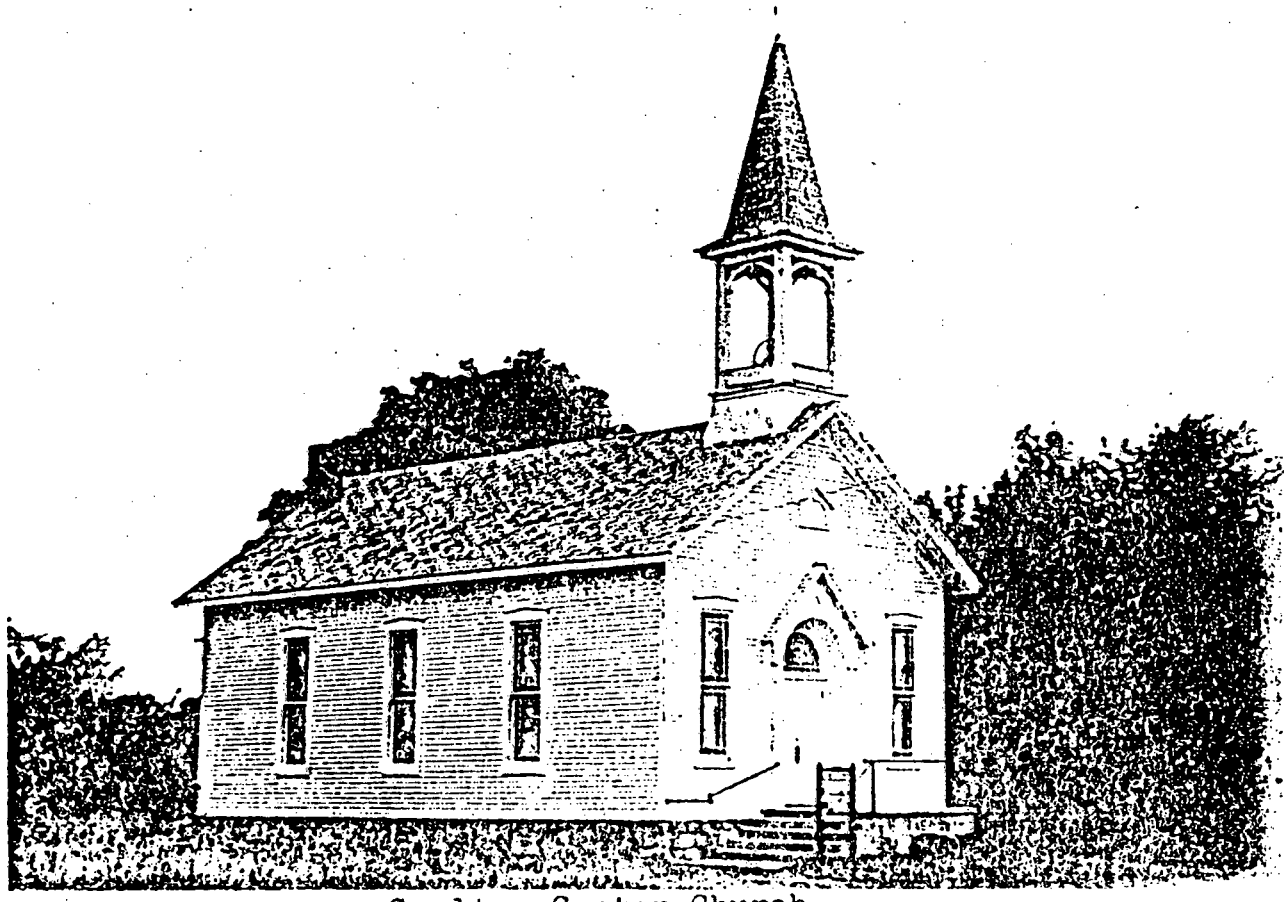
The Wright Church



The Monteray Church



The Manton Church

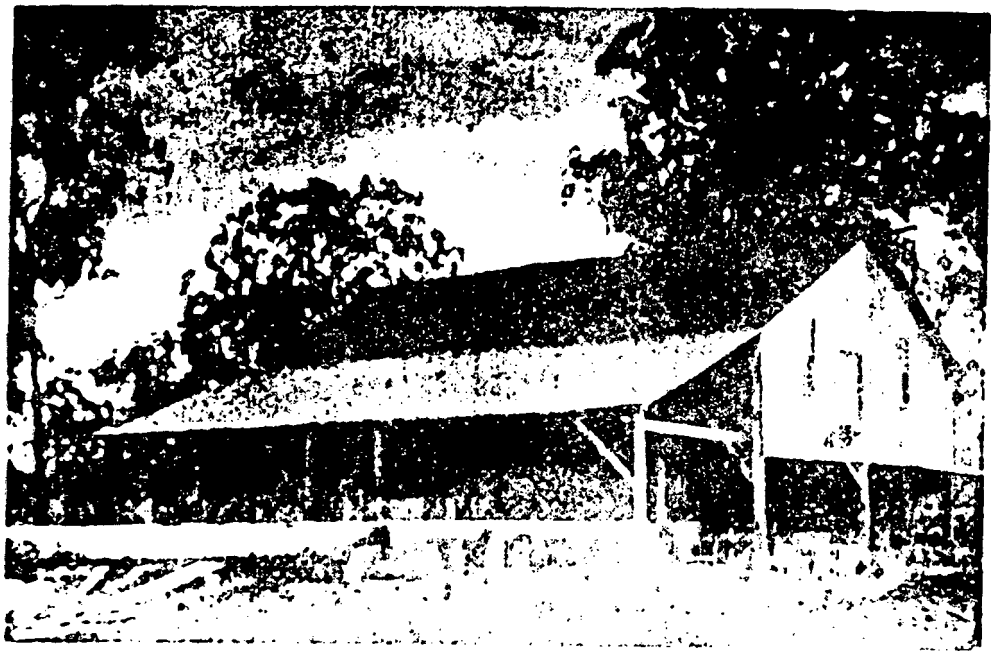


Carlton Center Church

APPENDIX B

AVONDALE COLLEGE

SOME BUILDINGS AND THE CHURCH



Avondale sawmill, 1895-1899

Buildings erected in 1897: Bethel Hall, right, and the multipurpose second building.

NOTE: The following pictures were taken from Milton Hook's Ed.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1978.

College Hall, 1899

Avondale Church, 1897

APPENDIX C

A QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE PRESIDENTS OF CONFERENCES AND MISSIONS OF THE SDA CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA AND THEIR RESPONSE

10 de enero de 1984

A los Presidentes de Asociación o Misión de
la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día en
Ibero-America.

Muy apreciados hermanos:

Mis mejores deseos de paz y prosperidad para Uds. y sus familias al iniciar la jornada del ano 1984.

Decía el inolvidable poeta Amado Nervo, en su poema "Dar" 'Todo hombre que te busca ha de pedirte algo,' y es eso exactamente lo que estoy haciendo mediante esta carta, pedir su generosa ayuda para un pequeno proyecto aquí en la Universidad Andrews.

Van a continuación una serie de preguntas, que apreciaré mucho se sirva responder. Posiblemente alguna pregunta no es pertinente en alguna Asociación o Misión. No obstante apreciaré que Ud. responda cuanto sea posible de este formulario.

La idea central del proyecto en mente, es obtener ideas que nos ayuden a construir lugares de culto con miras a dar a nuestros ninos, jóvenes y adultos, mayor comodidad y espacio para las actividades propias de la iglesia y atender al mismo tiempo las necesidades de la comunidad a quien la iglesia debe servir.

Quiero rogarles que me devuelvan este cuestionario contestado para la primera semana de febrero de 1984. De su atenta respuesta obtendremos el pulso, la respuesta precisa, para muchas incógnitas que a veces rodea el hecho de edificar un nuevo templo.

Reciban anticipadamente mi agradecimiento por su gentileza y bondad de contestar en forma clara y objetiva las preguntas adjuntas.

Sinceramente vuestro hermano en la Gloriosa Esperanza,

E. Zurita

Eduardo Zurita

1.- ¿Cuál es el número de miembros bautizados en su Asociación o Misión al 1º de enero de 1984? _____

2.- ¿Cuantas congregaciones adventistas hay en su territorio?
a. Iglesias organizadas _____ b. Grupos organizados _____

3.- ¿Cuál es el actual número de miembros de la Escuela Sabática en su Asociación o Misión? _____

4.- ¿Cuentan Uds., como Asociación o Misión, con lugares de culto que no son templos, sino lugares alquilados o propios, casas particulares, salones públicos, etc. donde algunas congregaciones se reunen para sus cultos? Si las hay, ¿cuál es el número de ellos? _____

5.- ¿Con cuantos templos propios templo: lugar dedicado exclusivamente para el culto cuenta su Asociación o Misión actualmente? _____

6.- Al hablar de templos propios, generalmente se piensa en edificios que contienen un espacio dedicado exclusivamente para el culto, además de otras acomodaciones. Quiera indicar el número de templos que tienen las siguientes dependencias:

a. Salas para los diferentes departamentos de la Escuela Sabática: en _____ templos

b. Salas o piezas especiales también para las clases de adultos de la Escuela Sabática: en _____ templos

c. Algún salón o sala grande adicional para reuniones sociales o recreativas: en _____ templos

d. Algunas otras salas o piezas dedicadas para Dorcas, cocina, sala de primeros auxilios, o sala de tratamientos: en _____ templos.

7.- ¿Tiene su Asociación o Misión, uno o más centros recreativos urbanos, que puedan ser usados por nuestra juventud de una o más iglesias cercanas? ¿Cuantos? _____

8.- ¿Cuenta su Asociación con algún tipo de restaurant para servir a la comunidad y enseñar algo respecto a la reforma pro-salud? _____ ¿ Cuántos? _____

9.- ¿Tiene su Asociación o Misión alguna sala de tratamiento médico, o salas de lectura (charlas) que sirvan para romper barreras de prejuicios y al mismo tiempo, ser usadas para servir a la comunidad? Si las hay, ¿podría indicar el número?

a. _____ Salas de tratamiento médico

b. _____ Salas para servir a la comunidad

10.- Al hablar de templos, ¿podría indicarnos el costo aproximado de un templo para 250 a 300 personas sentadas, con comodidades (salas) para las actividades de los diferentes departamentos de la Escuela Sabática, Dorcas, y un salón de recreaciones para los jóvenes?

a. Valor equivalente en dólares _____

b. Nº de sueldos de 100% en su Asociación _____

11.- Teniendo en cuenta las preguntas 4 y 5: ¿Cuántos nuevos templos necesiaría su Asociación para que cada congregación adventista tenga su propio lugar de adoración o templo? _____

a. Nº de iglesias organizadas que aún no tienen templo propio _____

b. Nº de grupos organizados que aún no tienen templo propio _____

12.- En su proyección de crecimiento y planes evangelísticos, ¿cuántos miembros más que los que hoy tiene espera tener al termino de cinco años? _____

13.- De acuerdo a su Proyección de Crecimiento, ¿cuántos nuevos templos necesitará construir para albergar a sus nuevos miembros? _____

14.- ¿Qué porcentage de esos nuevos templos cree Ud. que será posible financiar? _____%

15.- ¿Cuantas horas por semana, en promedio, se usa el salón principal de cada templo para reuniones varias, incluyendo los cultos del sábado? _____ horas.

16.- Cuando la congregación no tiene suficiente dinero para edificar un templo, ¿considera Ud. aceptable para el culto sabático el uso de un salón que durante la semana puede ser empleado para otras actividades, como ocurre por ejemplo en algunos colegios adventistas? _____

17.- Si en los lugares donde no tenemos templo por falta de recursos, y el dinero nos alcanzase para construir sólo un salón sencillo, que durante la semana pudiese ser usado también para cursos de cocina, mostrar películas buenas, para actividades recreativas de los jóvenes, ¿consideraría Ud. impropio hacer esa inversión menor (a la que se le podría dar muchas horas de uso por semana) en lugar de esperar algunos años hasta tener dinero para construir un templo?

18.- ¿Cuál piensa Ud. que sería la reacción de los hermanos, que usarían ese salón para cultos en sábados (si el salón no es consagrado como templo) si saben se lo usaría para actividades variadas en la semana? Por favor explique.

19.- ¿Cuál sería la reacción del úblico no adventista en su Asociación o Misión al ser invitado a un salón de uso múltiple, para clases de salud, actividades recreativas, y también predicaciones? Por favor explique.

20.- Apreciaremos agregue a continuación cualquier comentario o idea que Ud. desee exponer sobre lugares de culto.

Por favor, recuerde enviarme este cuestionario de vuelta a la brevedad posible.

Conference or Mission	Church Membership January 1, 1984	Sabbath School Membership	Nº of Organized churches	Nº of Organized companies	Nº of Church buildings	Nº of other Meeting Places (not church buildings)	Nº of church buildings with rooms for Children S. School	Nº of church buildins with rooms for adults S. School.
Southeast Mexican Conference	31,482	52,488	96	571	211	456	96	-
South Mexican Conference	39,243	46,196	69	618	100	10	80	-
West Mexican Conference	5,500	6,543	17	105	42	80	25	-
El Salvador Mission	25,875	26,565	109	106	105	110	20	-
West Puerto Rico Conference	12,061	15,000	110	22	105	5	3	-
North Dominican Mission	15,423	18,888	52	50	58	22	17	-
Atlantic Colombia Mission	10,483	15,000	50	73	40	83	13	-
North Argentina Mission	12,199	11,050	38	47	39	46	31	-
Lake Titicaca Mission	31,290	48,000	65	434	467	32	431	-
Parana (Brazil) Conference	30,893	27,342	106	222	270	58	178	-
Central Amazon Mission (Brazil)	19,528	20,690	33	106	110	-	10	15
Rio Grande do Sul Conference	27,551	-	82	159	184	57	217	-
Minas Gerais Mission	20,291	21,324	55	195	93	157	43	-
West S. Paulo Conference	22,793	28,420	75	114	75	30	60	1
Mato Grosso Mission	7,682	-	21	80	51	-	22	-
Rio de Janeiro Conference	21,916	-	102	119	60	-	30 ?	-
East S. Paulo Conference	31,619	32,020	93	112	70	135	70	1
South Chile Conference	17,834	15,493	79	85	119	41	10	-
Central Chile Conference	20,568	22,500	93	51	64	14	30 ?	-
Ecuador Mission	8,303	-	29	52	50	8	7	-
North Peru Mission	22,100	28,451	54	340	160	200	100	80
South Peru Mission	12,394	11,750	30	138	30	105	30	-
Paraguay Mission	3,690	2,900	43	-	43	-	20	-

Nº of churches with first aid rooms	Nº of churches with a room for community seevice	Nº of Recreation center in the Conference	Nº of Restaurants in the Conference	No of lecture rooms in the Conference	Nº of Church buildings with rooms for Dorcas	Nº of church buildigns with a large room for social gathering	Present Need of new church buildings	Current Construction cost of a church buildings (US dollars)
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	211	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	50,000
2	1	-	-	-	-	-	80	40,000
-	1	-	-	-	-	-	110	25,000
2	1	4	-	-	4	10	5	75,000
1	1	-	-	-	2	-	25	40,000
2	-	-	-	-	5	10	83	85,000
-	-	3	-	-	4	6	46	40,000
-	-	-		-	-	-	32	60,000
-	-	4	-	-	45	18	58	25,000
1	-	2	-	-	3	5	126	15,000
1	-	2	-	-	1	48	57	30,000
2	-	2	-	-	18	22	120	40,500
1	-	1	-	-	40	7	30	34,000
1	1	3	-	-	-	1	30	40,000
-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	50,000
2	2	-	1	-	12	3	135	45,000
2	2	10	-	-	-	4	41	40,000
-	1	-	-	-	-	5	93	40,000
-	-	4	-	-	4	1	8	53,000
-	-	-	-	-	30	50	141	30,000
1	1	1	-	-	10	30	70	30,000
-	-	3	-	-	-	5	-	20,000

Amount needed to cover present need of new church buildings (US. dollars	Membership net increase Projection for next 5 years	Nº of additional church buildings needed in the next 5 years	Amount needed to cover projected need of Church buildings for the next 5 years.. (US dollars	Weekly Hour Use
-	20,000	67	-	8,5
25,000,000	30,000	125	6,250,000	8
3,200,000	6,000	20	800,000	9
2,750,000	15,000	90	3,250,000	12
375,000	3,000	15	1,125,000	7
1,000,000	10,000	50	2,000,000	7
7,055,000	7,500	25	2,125,000	12
1,840,000	6,000	10 to 20	800,000	10
1,920,000	14,850	42	2,520,000	7
1,450,000	6,000	30	750,000	5,5
1,890,000	1,500	20	300,000	4
1,710,000	10,000	40	1,200,000	14
4,860,000	15,000	100	4,860,000	10
1,020,000	10,000	40	1,360,000	10
1,200,000	5,000	30	1,200,000	10
-	7,000	10	500,000	10
6,075,000	12,000	48	2,160,000	6,5
1,640,000	30,000	120	4,800,000	10
3,720,000	10,000	40	1,600,000	8
424,000	9,000	15	795,000	5
4,230,000	15,000	80	2,400,000	15
2,100,000	10,000	50	1,500,000	4
-	500	10	200,000	6

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NOTE: Manuscripts and letters of E. G. White cited in this Project are all located in the Ellen G. White Research Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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Chile College
Northeast Brazil College
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Bachelor of Arts	Chile College	1955
Bachelor of Arts	Northeast College Brazil	1963
Master of Divinity	Seminary, Andrews University	1972
Master of Arts	Graduate School, Andrews University	1980
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1956-1961	Minister, Rio de Janeiro Brazil
1962-1966	Pastor and teacher at Northeast College, Brazil
1967-1969	Minister, Newark, NJ
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